

MAY 1955

TWO DOLLARS

# CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL



## CHAMBERS'S DICTIONARY CROSSWORD No. 12 (April)

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# The President of America

ALBERT LEFEVRE

FROM afar the Matemba kraal looked as if it were hanging from the mountain-top, like an apple on a tree, but once one was half-way up the footpath one perceived that there was a kind of plateau from which a slope led mildly downwards for a stretch of several miles. The mountain itself, majestic and barren, was just inside the boundary of Swaziland, and the frontier of Portuguese East Africa was just beyond.

The few dozen men assembled in the circle of mud huts which formed the kraal were its entire male population. They sat in the hot sand, arms embracing ankles, feet tightly drawn up to buttocks. Only Mavimbela sat on a large stone, as became his dignity as headman. He was almost immobile. Both his hands rested on a walking-stick, on which his huge body leaned heavily from time to time when he was about to speak.

It was a day full of excitement. Early in the morning Teresa, Mavimbela's wife, had announced that a mosquito had entered her head through her left ear and was buzzing

around inside her brain, thus causing her great pain. It had needed a good beating from her husband to make her go to work. Ordinarily, Mavimbela was a kind and tolerant ruler, but, with the groundnuts almost ready for harvesting, it was his duty to ensure that all the women were working in the fields.

At noon Aaron Mokwena had arrived. Mavimbela well remembered his youth—how they had laughed when seeing for the first time an African in European clothes. But these were modern times. The sight of a white man was no longer a reason for the entire population to come swarming out of the huts, and even the children were accustomed to seeing visitors arrive from the cities of the west and south, white men and Africans, missionaries, traders, or fugitives on their last lap to the frontier.

'I am the bringer of great news,' announced Aaron.

The men took up position around Mavimbela and waited silently, their eyes half-closed in suspicion. Aaron was one of their own

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people, but nonetheless a stranger who had abandoned his father's customs, had trained his body to suffer the clothes of the white man, and spoke with a loud, insolent voice.

Aaron reached into a canvas bag he had brought along and began to hand out cigarettes from a cardboard box. Such delicacies as tobacco cigarettes were rare in the kraal. Once William Sorobo had brought a small packet from Mbabane, and the missionaries usually left a few when they called.

Mavimbela was very fond of the scented taste of the little white tubes. 'Yours is a wonderful box,' he said slyly.

'I know that well,' said Aaron. 'It costs as much as two head of cattle.'

'Cattle have calves,' said William Sorobo. 'Cigarettes are clouds.'

'I have with me enough of these boxes for a lobola for the finest daughter in Swaziland,' boasted Aaron.

'You are a great liar. You think we are all fools here.' Mavimbela looked greedily at the canvas bag, on which the visitor rested his hand lightly. 'We get all the knowledge from the missionaries and we know as much as the people in Mbabane, and even in Durban or Johannesburg.'

'You speak the truth,' assented Aaron. 'The whole of Swaziland knows that the chief of the Matemba kraal is a wise chief. But my boxes are not ordinary cigarettes. They are filled with the smell of many flowers, and they really cost very dear.'

'How did you amass so much wealth?'

Aaron smiled guardedly. 'It is easy in Johannesburg to win a fortune,' he said. 'The gold mines are like a plant which gives a fresh crop every morning.' He stopped, for at the mention of the words 'gold mines' the expression on the faces of the Matembas had become distrustful and grim.

'ARE you recruiting labour for the mines?' asked Mavimbela.

'I used to, many months ago,' said Aaron quickly, 'but I have not come now for that purpose.'

'This kraal,' said Mavimbela, 'does not need to send her sons to the gold mines. Our fields—he stretched his arm towards the mountain, which in its nearness seemed to touch the clouds—'yield all the food we want and our women are good workers. They say that in the mines our young men must walk

into the earth as deep as the height of Mount Kilimanjaro, until they see the sun no more but only the fires of the earth down below. They have to tear the gold from the rocks with their bare hands and at night they must sleep in great narrowness like seeds in a guava pear. Once they go to Johannesburg they never come back. The gold dust mixes with their lungs until the insides of their bodies become gold, and when they die the white men tear out the gold and carry it to their homes.'

'You speak about the old mines,' replied Aaron, with a bold and knowing smile. 'Is there any man in your kraal who has seen Johannesburg? Ah, you shake your head. The missionaries have not told you yet about my mine, the newest and most beautiful of them all. There the gold is just underneath the grass and all the workers have to do is to dig up the earth as deep as a man's arm and load the gold on to shining wagons which slide by themselves to the homes of the white men. And of each load the worker gets his share, until after a year he has enough gold to build a house for himself, where he keeps many women and where there is enough room for all the people of this kraal.'

The young men who were sitting behind their fathers opened their eyes widely. 'Are there so many of our women in Johannesburg?' asked Bengola, the eldest son of Mavimbela.

The chief motioned his son to be silent, but Aaron answered him quickly. 'The city is full of the most beautiful women of the land,' he said, 'who flock there because the young men in their home kraals have no cattle for lobola. In Johannesburg the men no longer pay lobola for their wives, they are as plentiful as the pips in a water-melon.'

Mavimbela had heard this before and knew it to be true. He himself had four daughters, and the disregard of the old custom struck him as utter heresy. 'Did you come to visit us, stranger,' he addressed Aaron, 'to tell us of the strange customs of the cities?'

In answer Aaron handed out another supply of cigarettes. This time he included the young men in his offer and helped each one with the lighting.

AT last Aaron settled down in his old place and took from his canvas bag a large thin book which glistened in many colours. It was an old American magazine which had

## THE PRESIDENT OF AMERICA

on its cover-page the picture of a well-dressed negro with deep, dreaming eyes. 'I bring you greetings from this brother of ours,' he announced dramatically, holding the picture up for all to see. 'Can anyone read?'

One after the other they shook their heads. Mavimbela took the paper and examined it with minute concentration. Then he handed it back and said: 'This man is a doctor.'

'You speak the truth,' said Aaron. 'This is Dr Ralph Bunche, the President of America.'

'The President of America is Sugar Ray Robinson,' cried Bengola.

'We do not believe your words,' said Mavimbela, ignoring his son's interjection. 'The President of America is Joe Louis.'

'We are all right,' said Aaron amiably. 'At first it was Joe Louis, then Sugar Ray Robinson beat him, and now it is Dr Ralph Bunche.'

'Did he beat Sugar Ray Robinson?' asked Bengola.

'He knocked the hell out of him.'

Mavimbela looked at the picture again and considered the great news weightily. 'And he asked you to bring greetings to us?'

'He sent me this letter!' Aaron pulled a sheet of paper with much writing on it from his pocket and showed it round. 'It says in this letter,' he explained, 'that the President feels lonely in America among so many white men, and it also says that he has many great decisions to make and no one to advise him. Many of the other Presidents before him have done many things wrong, and very few right, and the President wants the counsel of the wise Swazi chiefs who have ruled their people in peace for so long. In this letter he gives the names of all the great Swazi chiefs of whom he has heard. Your own name, Mavimbela, is among them, and he asks you to visit him.'

THE news made a deep impression on the Matembas. For a long time they had vaguely known about that small tribe of their brothers who far away in America dominated a mighty empire of white men. Many pictures had reached them of members of the black tribe, showing them in all their glory, always in the centre of great happenings, perhaps boarding a train amidst great cheering, or in the boxing-ring, or playing music on golden trumpets. Always it was the black

man who was the hero of the picture and the white people were grouped around him, much like the tribe of the Matembas now around Mavimbela. Some years ago the news had spread that Joe Louis was coming to Africa to greet his people. He would bring many presents and great happiness to the kraals of his native land. When he had not come the Swazis had waited with patience. Only the harvest days are short.

'Is the President sending one of his ships?' asked Mavimbela after a long silence.

'The President has many things to do. He does not think of such matters.'

'Then how can I go? The white men want many pound notes for the use of their ships.'

'You have many cattle.'

'You speak like a fool. If I were to sell my cattle, my people would die from hunger.'

Aaron shrugged his shoulders. 'I could give you some of my gold,' he said, after a pause, 'but I am only one man.'

The young men at the back took the hint. Slowly they came forward. Was Mavimbela not their chief? What the stranger had offered to do, they could not refuse. It was their duty, not the stranger's, to provide the gold for the chief's visit to the President of the faraway country. Moreover...

THE next hour was spent with much haggling and bargaining, and suddenly they had to hasten, because soon the women would return from the fields and their moaning might be an obstacle to the great plan. At last Mavimbela came to terms with Aaron Mokwena. Eight of the young men would go to the gold mines for one year, not as ordinary labourers, but as men of many privileges, as became the sons of the Matembas. Each of them would own a motor-car from the first day, live in a large house in Johannesburg and marry two wives. After one year they would have enough gold to buy many presents for the President of America, and Mavimbela would set out on the long trip, and the young men would return to the kraal with their wives and many fresh cattle. To console the fathers for the separation from their sons all the contents of the canvas bag were to remain with them.

Before long Aaron produced eight sheets of hard paper with many printed letters on them, and each of the youngsters placed on a sheet his fingerprints and a laborious cross,

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thus becoming a party to a legal contract under the Masters and Servants Act of the Union of South Africa.

'You said,' remarked Mavimbela at last when all was done, 'that none of my people will work under the ground in the dark.'

'I said it, and it is true.'

'Then write it on each paper.'

'I shall.' Aaron took out his pen again and wrote in stilted letters on each contract the words: 'This contract is for a period of three years.'

THERE was a hasty departure, for the sun was slowly reaching for the horizon. They formed a single file along the footpath, Aaron with Bengola in the lead.

'There are wonderful times ahead of you,' Aaron chatted away gaily as they were walking down the hill. 'The city is marvellous to behold and greater than all the mountains in Swaziland. Once you are there you will learn the ways of the white men as I have learnt them and you will see how much truth there is in all I have told you. You will eat

meat every day of your lives and your bellies will become round and fat.'

They had reached a bending of the path and there behind a rock, in the flat country, was a motor-van. The loading space was made of strong wire-mesh and the driver's seat was protected from behind by a steel fence, thus forming a kind of cage on wheels. The back door of the cage was open. Two enormous Zulus were standing next to the vehicle, armed with knobkerries and sjamboks. 'In there,' said Aaron kindly, pointing at the van.

Somewhat overcome by the suddenness of the proceedings, one after the other the native youths scrambled inside. Only Bengola hesitated for a fraction of a second. One of the Zulus approached. 'Checha!' he cried and lifted the sjambok. Bewildered, Bengola followed his brothers.

The Zulus closed the back door of the van. Aaron turned the key in the lock, then he climbed on to the driver's seat with the two Zulus. An instant later the motor-van took its course towards the wide plains of the west, towards the Golden City.

June First Story: The first instalment of *Kalm*, the study of an Alaskan Indian girl,  
by R. N. Stewart.

---

## Letters

*Brief day ago what need had we of words?  
They were but laughing banners lightly flung  
Across the fabric of our understanding—  
What need when lips can sing in briefest touch  
Illimitable song, when eyes  
Are golden trumpets of the heart,  
And all the sonnets penned in fire  
Live in the fingertips that sift my hair—  
What need of words when we can share our laughter?*

*Yet now out of their poverty  
I must find messengers to reach your heart;  
To their cold, clumsy hands entrust  
The fragile, soft-winged moths of thought,  
And search in vain through their drab, withered ranks  
For laughing, light-foot syllable  
Or tender, warm, untutored phrase  
That naked, lovely and free as thought,  
May race foam-footed through the night  
Bringing my love to you.*

LESLIE WINSLOW.

# The Marriage Sermon

MAIE WILLATTS

WHEN I first heard about the custom, it seemed very odd to me to be paid for attending church. It was generally the other way round. But strange things happen in the country.

We were living then in a village near the river, and very soon after taking up residence I heard about the yearly event held in the church called locally 'the preaching of the marriage sermon', and how on hearing this sermon one received a sum of money.

Being most interested, I asked an old inhabitant, a dear old soul who 'obliged' for me, but who loved more than anything else a chance to come to the house to drink cider and to gossip.

She was amazed to learn I knew nothing about this custom. 'What,' said she, 'you don't know nuthin' about the prachin' of the marriage sarmon? Well, of course, you bein' a foreigner'—I was born and bred in the county, about fourteen miles away—'you udn't. Oh, I udn't miss it for worlds, and many's the time I 'ad me a dab in the fist from gwain' to the prachin'. Plenty comes, I can tell ee, when there's money to be got for nuthin' but listenin'. Chapel folk comes—ay, and some from across the warter. I did yer tell as them be gwain' to be stopped next time, and so a should, too!' She muttered and glowered—evidently a sore point.

'WELL now,' she went on after a moment, 'this yer prachin' of the marriage sarmon come about 'undreds of yers agone, when a maydon lady live at Abbotts Court. She were plenty religious and gettin' on, mind, when one day she gets 'erself a 'usband.

'Well, she bein' that plazed with 'er mon and wedded life, she left in 'er will five pound a yer for ever, and this yer five pound was to be paid out so that a sarvice could be 'eld

each yer on 'er weddin' annerversory in May, and the folk livin' in the village could share 'er 'appiness. A pound to go to the parson who prached a marriage sarmon, ten shillin' to the clurk if a come, pound to the bell-ringers if they rings a weddin' peal—and you bet they does, rest to be divided 'mongst congregation. Lor, I udn't miss un for worlds! You could go if you'd a mind—seein' as 'ow you lives 'ere now,' she added very graciously.

After that lucid account, whether right or wrong, my imagination was so tickled I thought about the odd custom quite a lot. So, when May came round again, I suggested to a near-by friend that we attend the service.

ON a bright May morning we duly joined the numerous women, some carrying children, others pushing prams, but all making their way churchwards.

One of the churchwardens was sitting in the porch carefully entering in a large book the number going in. A buxom woman carrying a child was marching in before me. The churchwarden, looking at her, said: 'You don't live here, you come from across the river.'

The woman stopped, taken aback, but, immediately belligerent, retorted: 'What if I does live across the water! I've come to see me mother, and mother's agoin', so why shouldn't I? You nor nobody can stop I goin', so there!'

'Well,' answered the churchwarden, quite unshaken, 'I'm not stopping you going to church, but you don't get any money, see. This money is for folk in the parish, and you come from over the river. If you want to hear the sermon, you can, but no money, mind!'

Extremely red in the face, the woman, after



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hovering uncertainly for a moment, passed into church.

Evidently, I thought, the sorting out process had begun. I felt rather diffident, as I was fairly new to the village, and was inclined to hang back, but the churchwarden, grinning, waved us forward. Our numbers, thirty-two and thirty-three, were duly entered in the book.

We rather self-consciously seated ourselves at the back. The front pews were filled by women with extremely restless children, who much preferred running about the aisle or standing on the pew-seats to taking an interest in the service.

A shortened form of matins was taken by the old vicar, attended by the clerk, with special prayers for the married and those about to be married.

The organist being absent, the vicar himself started us off singing the hymn, unfortunately striking too high a key. Oh dear! We did our best, but by the end of the first verse we were literally shrieking. So, stopping us, the vicar once again started us off, this time so low we just managed to groan our way through the rest of the verses. It must have sounded awful, but no one seemed to mind, for next came the high-spot of the service—the marriage sermon.

The old vicar, recalling his own wedding anniversary, which fell on the same day, said he had enjoyed twenty-five happy married years, and we all listened, except the children, to a good and sympathetic discourse on marriage and its attendant problems.

I was distracted several times by incessant clinking of coins and muttering coming from the porch. The churchwarden was getting ready for the handing-out.

The bellringers, evidently wanting to waste no time in earning their pound, started a resounding wedding-peal, so I was unable to hear the end of the service.

WE were amused to observe the eagerness the congregation showed to get outside, probably thinking: 'The early bird catches the worm.'

My friend and I were last to emerge. Averting my eyes, and with some embarrassment, I held out my hand. The churchwarden, saying in a hearty voice, 'See you at the next preaching,' put some coins into my reluctant palm. I thanked him, and without looking at the money hurriedly put it into my pocket.

On the way homewards, my friend and I passed several groups of women and children, busy, no doubt, discussing their gains.

I did not go again to hear the marriage sermon, neither did I probe deeper into the origin, preferring to believe the story of the maiden lady who was so pleased at last to be married that she left a sum of five pounds a year for all time to be used to benefit the folk of the village.

Although it is many years ago since I listened to the sermon, I shall always remember the time I was paid 1s. 3d. for going to church.

---

## Whitsun in Wildhern

*So white, the ribbon verges of our roads,  
With bloom that no one planted there for joy—  
And green the self-sown grasses that have sprung  
Through last year's fallen leaves towards the light.*

*So white, the cresting blossom round our fields,  
On trees that no one guarded from the frost—  
And green the tangled hedges climb again  
Through last year's bracken beds towards the sky.*

*Eternal splendour rises from the earth,  
Through death the living seed still comes to life—  
And still God's shining spirit bids us come  
Through this world's certain ways towards our home.*

CONSTANCE A. MCFADYEAN.



# The Romance of Trout in Kenya

---

T. L. HATELY

IT is fashionable nowadays to celebrate anniversaries, centenaries, and tercentenaries of the birth or death of prominent people and of important events in history. This year is an important one in the history of Kenya Colony, for it is the jubilee of the introduction of trout to the highland streams there. Until 1905 there was not a trout in the length and breadth of the Colony. The many streams from the slopes of Mount Kenya, the Aberdares, and Mount Elgon had no fish-life in the upper reaches, their waters, coming from the high altitudes, being too cold for indigenous fish, which seldom venture higher than 6000 feet and prefer to keep to the warmer and quieter stretches of the rivers.

It is recorded that many years ago, when Kenya was still known as the East Africa Protectorate, two of the old pioneers, Lord Delamere and Colonel E. S. Grogan, were discussing how the attractions of the country could be made known to people in the Old Country. Delamere said: 'Wheat in the fields.' Grogan, always a visionary, said: 'Trout in the rivers.' Delamere took the wheat in hand, and the many thousands of fertile acres now producing crops of wheat, oats, barley, and so on, are evidence of the success of his efforts. Residents in Kenya and visitors from South Africa, America, and Britain who have fished the lovely streams in the Kenya Highlands know how successful Colonel Grogan's great experiment has been.

IT was early in 1905 when a large consignment of ova was purchased from the Howietown Fisheries in Dumfries and sent out to British East Africa in the charge of one of the men from the hatcheries. To stock or restock a river in Scotland or England is a comparatively simple operation. Stock-ponds, as a rule, are accessible, transport offers no

great difficulty, and an abundance of skilled helpers is usually available. But when the first trout came to Kenya motor transport was unknown and roads were almost non-existent, storage on steamers was far from efficient, and the long voyage included a period in the heat of the Red Sea, followed by the slow train-journey from Mombasa to Naivasha. From railhead there the fish had to be transported by porters on a track leading over the Kinangop Plateau, skirting a spur of the Aberdare range, to the great moorland where the Gura has its source at an altitude of 11,000 feet. And there the first trout in Kenya found their home as the result of hard work, efficient organisation, difficulties met and overcome, a long arduous safari, and, not least, a lavish expenditure of money.

This first importation was financed by Colonel Grogan personally, and when the trout were well established a subscription-list was organised at the instance of Sir Frederick Jackson for further importations, and in 1919 the Kenya Angling Association was formed, which made itself responsible for the care of trout and the stocking of other suitable streams.

By 1921 the Association found that the work and expense were too great for a private body and their self-imposed duties were taken over by the Game Department together with their Warden, the late Captain Dent. In recognition of the work done by the Association, Government granted it a lease over the Northern and Southern Mathioya Rivers for the exclusive use of members.

To-day, practically every river from Mount Elgon, on the Uganda border, to the eastern slopes of Mount Kenya has been stocked with trout, brown or rainbow, either by the Game Department or by settlers who want 'somewhere to fish', and a well-organised research station is now in operation, where

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investigations are being made into the growth and habits of trout and where fry are made available for the many angling clubs and associations throughout the Colony.

In one of his books, Negley Farson, writing on Kenya, says: 'Kenya has some trout streams that make you thankful just to be alive on the day you are fishing them. No visitor to that majestic part of the world should fail to take his rods with him. If he does, he will miss one of the most exhilarating experiences that the Colony can offer.' But it is well that the visitor who 'brings his rods' should realise that the trout are not like Topsy, who just 'grow'd', but that their existence is the result of the imagination, labour, and financial support of the pioneers who had faith in the future of the Colony as a place fit for anglers to live in.

IT may be fitting to recount in detail the early efforts to stock what, in the opinion of good judges, is the finest trout stream in Kenya, the Mathioya River. It began many years ago, when a settler from the Scottish Borders was on foot safari across the Aberdare range. Coming over one of the steep ridges, he caught sight of the stream winding its way round the foothills, with grass-covered haughs like those by a Border burn of his youth, which

*Canna rin without a turn,  
And wi' its bonnie babble fills  
The glens among oor native hills.*

He is reported to have knelt in the bracken and prayed to the god of fishermen that he might be allowed to live to see a stream so obviously designed for trout fulfilling its proper destiny. But providence required no little assistance from him and others before his prayer was answered and his devotion rewarded.

The first attempt at stocking was made in 1926, when a consignment of ova was transported to the forest-line, but the long journey over difficult roads rendered this a failure, and the ova had to be destroyed. A few months later some 700 fry were brought across the hills in tanks, but again the long arduous safari proved too much and none of the young fish reached their prospective new home alive. Later in the same year, canvas buckets were

substituted for the tank and four trout allocated to each bucket. The swinging and bumping of the containers kept the water aerated, and this time 380 young fish were successfully installed. But paths had to be cut through the dense forest to reach the stream. A further consignment of ova was successfully hatched out in 1927, but, during the rains, a landslide filled the hatching-boxes and a large number of the fry were lost; however, 900 survived and duly reached the river. Since then they have multiplied and waxed exceeding fat, and they or their descendants have migrated to the lower reaches, either by reason of their own curiosity or on account of heavy floods, while many have been caught by members and taken downstream, where the water is heavier and food more plentiful.

Now the river offers fish and fishing worthy of the beautiful country through which it flows—for Nature has lavished her beauties on this valley with no niggardly hand. The great forests, the abundance of wild flowers and strange birds, the gorgeous butterflies, and the timid, seldom seen, forest folk all make a strong appeal to the nature-lover. The cool clear waters flow over a clean shingle bed under towering trees, from which are festooned creepers with pendant blooms in pink, blue, and red; and for further delight are rare and beautiful orchids, giant ferns, and the continual play of sun and shadow on trout-stocked pools. On the shingle one may see tracks of a dainty bush-buck, which has fled at the sound of one's approach. A couple of forest pig may be seen cooling off in the water after a scamper through the forest. The path the angler takes to circumvent a deep pool has been levelled for him by a passing herd of elephant, and the great saucer-like depressions show where the big bull has stood. There are traces of trees which have been pushed aside and bamboo clumps trodden down to make straight the path for the youngsters, and, if one is lucky, there may be a glimpse of the giant kingfisher flashing past 'like a stray thought of God'.

What a tragedy it is that this once-peaceful valley is now the haunt of desperate gangs of Mau Mau terrorists. But they will go, and anglers will once again be able to follow 'that laudable and ancient art, worthy the knowledge and practice of a wise man.'



## The Lovely Day

MONICA EWER

MRS DEAN did good by stealth. Since the late Mr Dean was now either surfeited with or beyond the reach of good, his widow had time on her hands. Years of trying to do good to other people had unaccountably left this nice unimaginative woman innocent and optimistic.

Miss Reilly, at the registry office, merely thought her a chump. No sane housewife would want to employ Marge Finnally, just gone seventeen, only experience 'helping Mum'.

'I'll be happy to train her,' said Mrs Dean, eagerly. 'You can rest assured she will have a good home.'

Miss Reilly, who couldn't have cared less, murmured politely, took her fee, and promised that the girl would report for work next day at Mrs Dean's modern labour-saving flat.

The girl brought her belongings in a brown-paper parcel. She was a gawky, sallow girl, in faded rayon. Mrs Dean made a mental note that she needed salads, milk, and plenty of fresh air.

'What's your name, my dear?'

'Marge, mam.'

'I shall call you Margaret. So much prettier. And you must call me madam.'

'Yes, mam.'

Mrs Dean knew that one must not force the pace of instruction. She took Marge to see her airy pink-and-white bedroom. 'Have you had a room to yourself before, Margaret?'

'No, mam.'

'I know you'll take a pride in it and keep it as nice as it is now.'

That was the first of many pointers in the right direction, all of which Marge took in enigmatic silence, neither resisting, nor co-operating, moving passive and obedient through the day's work.

There was much to be learnt. There was the machine that washed plates and the machine that washed clothes, and the machine that ate dust and the machine that made ice. You had to learn to wait at table and turn down the bed at night, to answer the telephone and polish the silver and the brass and the parquet, and wear print frocks in the morning and a black frock in the afternoon. Occasionally Mrs Dean said how glad she was to give Margaret a first-class training.

Marge was given an egg for breakfast, and salads and wholemeal bread for lunch, and a chop and greens for dinner.

Mrs Dean reported back to Miss Reilly. 'I thought you'd like to know that Margaret is happy and grateful and doing well.'

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'Can she cook?' Miss Reilly was worried lest she had let a treasure slip through her fingers.

'I'll teach her presently. Monday is Bank Holiday. I'll give her the day off.'

'You're very near the Heath. Insist that she is back by half-past seven. One can't be too careful with young girls.'

'You're so right.' Mrs Dean gathered up her things. 'And we're *in loco parentis*.'

Miss Reilly didn't understand the expression but she thought what a bit of slap and tickle that Marge Finnally would have on Hampstead Heath on a Bank Holiday.

Marge received the news in her stoical, monosyllabic way. 'Thank you, mam,' she said.

'Madam,' said Mrs Dean automatically. 'Leave as early as you like, my dear, but be back by seven-thirty. Your dear mother wouldn't like you to be out late on a Bank Holiday.'

ON Monday morning Marge laid the breakfast-table and disappeared. It was quite a journey from Hampstead to St Katherine Docks.

It was nine o'clock when Marge strolled along East Smithfield in the shadow of the blank wall that was broken only by numbered gates. She did not hurry. She was flavouring the security of home. She stopped to stare down into a bombed site, covered with tins and broken bottles and growing a crop of ragged weeds. Mum had told her that Mrs Smith had been killed there, and she shivered delightedly, for she could just remember Mrs Smith, who had been a great horse of a woman whom nothing but a bomb would kill.

Marge glued her nose to the cheap-clothing shop, with the hooks that dockers use, and the piles of boiler-suits, and the secondhand white shoes. Sweet, familiar, unchanging.

Past Dock Street to the point where Smithfield merges into the Highway, turning left up a side street, seeing the coloured men coming and going from licensed boarding-houses for seamen. The holiday gave a Sunday hush to the neighbourhood. The pubs were not yet open. In the narrow 19th-century houses curtains were still drawn. Everyone who could was sleeping late. For miles the little houses, the pubs, the shops, the river itself, slumbered, like some great beast that would presently wake to dangerous,

destructive life. The sun shone and the pavements sent up little waves of heat.

'Hello, young Marge!'

She turned and a flush touched her sallow cheeks and her sullen mouth twitched a little to a smile. 'Hello, yourself.'

Bill Warren was twenty-two, slight and glossy, and a fancy dresser. His ferret eyes ran over the undeveloped body. Young as he was, his mouth could shut like a trap, and he knew that he could bend women to his will. 'Got a good crib up West?'

Marge knew what he wanted, but she wasn't telling. Mrs Dean might be nuts, but Marge didn't want any trouble. 'It's not much of a place,' she said.

'Get a good screw?'

This might be the prelude to a touch. Marge shook her head and lied glibly. 'She puts my money in the Post Office for me.'

'You girls will stick anything,' he said contemptuously.

'We has to.' That was a fact to which she was already wise. 'You going somewhere?'

The hard tight smile. 'They're waiting for me. Be seeing you sometime.'

He slouched off, walking like an indecisive cat, one hand fingering something in his pocket. It might be a cosh or a razor-blade or a knife. The gang would be expecting him, and Bank Holiday was a good day for mischief. The newspapers had a long name for people like Bill, but Marge couldn't remember just what it was. She wished she were going too.

She stood looking after him until he was out of sight, her wide smile tender, her senses stirred. If she hadn't been so downright, he would have been interested and gone on talking. She shrugged her thin shoulders. What was the use? Bill could have any girl friends he wanted and she knew that she was no oil-painting.

SHE walked on and turned into one of the little houses and found the family in the kitchen at breakfast. Mum, fat and drowsy, behind the teapot; Dad still collarless, but wearing his best pants; Elsie, in bright blue rayon; and the two younger boys, lively and quarrelsome and ready for the day's excitement.

'Well, see who's here!' Dad made a clumsy dive in her direction and smacked her flat behind.

## THE LOVELY DAY

'Get yourself a cup, Marge,' said Mum.

'I'll fry you a bit of bacon, ducks.'

'I'll do it myself, Mum.'

It was good to be back at the old gas-cooker, using the one and only frying-pan, doing it all without interference. It was good to taste the bitter tea, sitting elbows on table, hearing the clatter of familiar voices, smelling the dockside air, compounded of many cargoes.

'Tell us about your grand place, Marge.'

'That's right,' said Dad. 'I want you to get on in the world.' At rare intervals, Jim Finnally, stevedore, became ambitious for his children. Marge had been sent into service so that she could learn to be a lady.

Marge told her story quickly, told about the electric gadgets, and the washing-machine, and Mrs Dean wearing everything clean underneath every day. It made them all laugh a lot. Marge hurried her recital because she wanted to hear the home news and forget that Mrs Dean existed.

Elsie was always ready to talk. She rattled on about the factory. She and the girls had done this; she and the boys had done that; you earned a packet on piecework; they'd had a dance; the foreman had got fresh; the charge-hand was a stinker.

'Wish I was in a factory,' said Marge wistfully.

'You're getting education,' said Dad, and no one ever disputed what Dad said.

When Marge had left home the boys had been arguing, and they were still arguing. They did it without malice. It was the only form of conversation they knew. To-day Bert, who was fifteen, was going out with his pals. Fred, who was thirteen, wanted to tag along.

'We don't want no kids,' said Bert repeatedly.

'Kid yourself,' retorted Fred.

It went on and on. No one paid any attention. The boys arguing was the background music of home. Presently, still arguing, the boys pushed back their chairs and disappeared down the street.

Mum started to collect the breakfast dishes. Elsie went upstairs to do her final prinking. Marge went with her and sat on the double-bed they had shared in the cosy, stuffy room. She ran her hand over it lovingly, thinking of the lovely sleepy gossips and the security of that double-bed.

'Any boys round that place you work?' asked Elsie.

'No. And if there was, she'd never let me have one. She'd think boys weren't nice.'

Elsie laughed shrilly. 'Ain't no one told her about the bees and the flowers!'

'She don't know nothing.'

'You still sweet on Bill Warren? He's going with that redhead at the Cross Keys. Bill's no good.'

'I never thought he was.' The fact that Bill was no good didn't make him any less attractive, but Marge knew that you seldom got the boy you wanted, so you just took whatever boy you could get.

Presently Elsie went off on the back of a motor-bike with a young man she had met at the Palais de Danse.

While Marge did the washing-up, Dad got dressed. He was going by special bus to Epping and was to meet the other members of the Darts Club outside the Cross Keys at eleven. 'Shan't be back till they close,' he said, when he came down in his Sunday suit, looking as if his great muscles would burst in at the seams. 'Expect you'll be gone, Marge. Learn all you can and next place you can ask twice the money.'

Marge looked bleakly into a future made up of a succession of Mrs Deans. She could not explain how dull it was, as if all the drama, all the expectancy, had suddenly been taken from her life and she was still too young for downright rebellion.

SHE helped Mum make the beds. They smoothed down the sheets, plumped up the pillows, and straightened the blankets.

'She makes me turn the mattresses every day.'

'Whatever for?'

'I dunno.'

They washed up sketchily in the untidy kitchen. 'She has a machine. You put in all the plates and things and it does 'em for you. Takes twice as long.'

'You can't beat elbow-grease,' said Mrs Finnally, giving the frying-pan a perfunctory wipe.

They talked and talked. An orgy of gossip. Marge had lived for a whole week in silence. Now she could tell Mum of the strange goings-on.

'Don't seem sense to me,' said Mum repeatedly, a sentiment with which Marge heartily agreed.

Over a midday meal of dripping and toast



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and strong tea Mum recited the local news. It was ripe with drama, with birth and death, with cops and prison sentences, with passion and illicit love, and a dirge about hard work and high prices.

'I miss you, Marge.' Mrs Finnally yawned and stretched. 'It's all too much for me to manage alone.'

'You have a nap, Mum. I'll do the washing.'

Mum slumbered noisily in the armchair of cracked leather. Marge sorted the week's wash, got out the tub, and the primitive scrubbing-board, boiled innumerable kettles, and finally hung the clean clothes in the backyard for the neighbours to admire. Then she peeled and sliced four pounds of potato-chips, flicked round with a duster, emptied the garbage, and scrubbed the sink.

It was time to prepare the evening meal. The boys would be back ravenous, and Elsie might bring her new young man.

But before any of them arrived it was time for Marge to leave. 'If I'm late, she'll create.' Marge checked herself. 'No, she won't. I'd rather have a good old up-and-downer.'

'Bit of temper clears the air.'

'I don't like it there, Mum.'

'Your Dad is set on you bettering yourself.'

'What's it get you?'

'I dunno. No use arguing with your Dad.'

Any married woman will tell you the same. It's the men settle everything in the end.'

Marge picked up her cheap white handbag. 'Don't let that washing get too dry before you iron it. Came up a fair treat. Good-bye, Mum. Take care of yourself.'

THE late afternoon sun touched the tops of the high bombed factories, so that they looked like ruined castles out of a fairy-tale. The pubs were open, there was stir, music and voices and drama behind the doors that swung open and shut. Marge walked slowly, hoping the boys would whistle. They didn't. I'm still too young, she thought, to console herself.

In the dull respectability of Hampstead Mrs Dean opened the door to her ring. Why, she thought, in alarm, the girl's face is animated at last. She looks like—like a girl who's been kissed. 'Did you have a nice time, my dear?'

'Lovely, thank you, mam. I mean—madam.'

'A little rest, a little change, and we all work better next day.'

In the kitchen, hate in her heart, Marge fed the washing-machine its favourite detergent and gloomily stacked the luncheon plates into its innards. The glorious Bank Holiday was over.

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## Lang'r Days

*The siller mawkin o' the day  
Is tint i' the burrow o' nicht,  
The hirsels and howes and the mirky glens  
Lie dowie oot o' his sicht.*

*The wandert, fashed, and thowless fowk  
Wad scunner him in his track,  
And tryst the huntress o' the nicht  
Wi' her star-hounds at her back.*

*But the blythe, and bairnies i' their ploys,  
The luv-lilters, the thrang,  
Wad hae him staucher i' his gait  
For the day tae be unco lang.*

*Maybe yon fluff o' trauchlin clood  
Ayont the gloamin' grey  
Is a badan o' his pookin' pelt,  
Tint threep for a lang'r day.*

WENDY WOOD.



# A Medical Trip among the Head-Hunters of Sarawak

MARGARETTA MORRIS

MIRTH and much speculation were caused by the confirmed rumour of the proposed trip up the Paku river, in the second division of Sarawak, north-west Borneo. The Sea-Dayaks were worried about the increasing sterility of their women. Medical headquarters decided to send a unit to investigate the cause. The unit included a woman doctor, Dr E; a public health nurse, nicknamed Lisa; two Dayak nurses, named Cyma Dora and Victoria, both of whom spoke fair English; Nawi, a Malay pathologist; Peter, a young Christian Dayak, to act as our interpreter; and myself.

Arrangements were made for us to live during the two-weeks' trip with the Sea-Dayaks in their long-houses. The houses are built near the riverside and are spaced a varying number of miles apart. There are ten houses on the Paku. Each is known by name and number of doors, doors signifying the number of families living in the house. It was arranged that we stay at Tanjong 17 doors, Samu 23, Danau 9, and Penom 14. Patients from the other houses and near-by rivers would travel to us at the different points.

We had but little idea of what to expect. If rumour were to be believed, we were in for some hard travel, and people cheerfully assured us that all Dayak houses are filthy and the communal life such that one never had a moment's privacy. We heard all about Mr X and Mr Y, who on their return from such a trip had to go into hospital with typhoid and dysentery.

Museum models we had seen of long-houses showed us how whole villages are housed under one roof. Some houses are so big they can take up to forty families. They are constructed in a straight line, elevated

from the ground some six to twelve feet. A very narrow notched log at either end serves as entrance and exit. On entering the house, one finds the long, wide public hall, which in use is divided lengthwise into three sections. Bachelors, old men, and young boys sleep on the right; the centre is the workshop during the day and place of entertainment at night; on the left is the highway, a few feet wide, and off this the family doors open outwards. The doors close automatically by means of a heavily-weighted thong attached to the inside. From the men's sleeping-place doors and windows open on to the uncovered verandah, which is used for drying clothes. Dye-vats are also kept there and the weaving of mats and other work carried on when the weather is fine. Looking at the models, we wondered where three European women were to bathe, change, and sleep. It remained to be seen!

Days were spent organising food, servants, and medical equipment. Knowing we must travel by frail native perahus, we tried to collect only the barest necessities. When they were assembled on the clean, comfortable launch *Mariette*, the whole presented a formidable amount.

ON the night, friends and relatives came to see us off from Pending. We waved a cheery farewell to them as our launch pulled out. The darkness soon swallowed them up. A cool, fresh breeze, and we were off to the land of the once-notorious head-hunters. Cheeriness died abruptly when, two hours later, the launch turned into a very rough sea. We were in our bunks, but sleep was impossible. The wicked little vessel threw us recklessly about. For one very seasick, trying to grope in the darkness for the tiny bathroom

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became a matter of many bruises and general disaster.

In the early dawn the still water of the Saribas river soothed the shaken and pale women emerging on to the small deck. Even the dismal vista of Spaoh was welcome. The *Mariette* was tied to the jetty. Here we awaited the arrival of the D.O. (District Officer), who was coming down from Betong to accompany us to Tanjong to introduce us to the *tua rumah*, the headman of the house.

Chug, chug of a motor-launch, and here was our D.O., who greeted us with a shy: 'Good-morning.' His gaze wandered about, scanning the numerous boxes, camp-beds, kitchen and medical equipment. His expression was a wonder to behold, as he remarked: 'Are you expecting all this to travel upriver?'

'Yes, I am afraid so,' replied Dr E.

'Good God!' said the D.O., and lapsed into thoughtful silence. One could almost hear his brain ticking over as he mused: 'Isn't this just like women! What can Government be thinking, to send these three greenhorns into Dayak country? Why, when I go up country, all I ever take is a couple of tins of corned beef and two pairs of shorts.'

According to the D.O., most of the people were away attending a party on another river, and, even if we did find a few women at home, they would be far too shy to answer intimate questions. We were glad he was returning to Betong after introductions. One could feel he had visions of our getting into endless difficulties and of our soon sending back a runner with an S.O.S. message of the 'rescue the perishing, care for the dying' kind, for on leaving Spaoh we cut our last link with civilisation. At Spaoh itself, indeed, the only excuse for a name is a small Chinese bazaar and the Government office with its telephone.

We sat back while our D.O. organised the transference of baggage to the outboard motor. Later, as we chugged up the Saribas, the D.O. started a heavy conversation on politics, difficult to follow above the roar of the engine, especially as half our attention was on the scenery, which was becoming more interesting. We tried to scream out intelligent remarks.

THREE hours later we turned into the Paku, and shortly Tanjong was before us. Now

we would know if rumour were indeed a lying jade! Reports at Kuching led us to suppose the Dayaks would greet us clad only in their birthday-suits, save for a few odd scraps of rag here and there. But not a bit of it. Most of the people were at the riverside dressed in sarongs and batus of the gayest colours, spotlessly clean.

The D.O. leapt out of the perahu, spoke rapidly in Dayak to the headman, then turned and introduced us. The men smiled, the women smiled, the children smiled, we smiled. All seemed glad to meet. Gentle hands led us up the slippery bank, then up the equally slippery ladder into the house.

Dayak welcome follows a strict routine. In the centre of the hall a table covered with a beautiful handwoven tapestry was laden with bottles of beer, brandy, lemonade, arrack wine, cigarettes, and biscuits. While we were taking refreshments, an address of welcome was read out and afterwards translated into English by Peter. After this, hot cocoa was served. Dr E replied suitably in English, stating that we would do all in our power to help the women with their difficulties. This was translated into Dayak by Peter, and was greeted with more smiles and nods. Now custom demanded that we visit each family in its own room. Here the procedure was the same as at the table, only now we were seated on the floor with the family, in a circle around the bottles. By the time we had repeated this seventeen times our faces had a set, glued sort of smile and we were somewhat dizzy with all the various sips of fluid.

Later, we thought with longing of bed, and after dinner optimistically imagined we might retire. But not so. Custom now demanded a party. Dayaks love a party, and the most unusual occurrence of the presence of three European women was a grand opportunity. So there had to be singing, dancing, and clapping of hands.

All the women and children came out of their rooms and sat demurely on the floor. We joined them. The men sat opposite, and the band, in the centre, set up a monotonous but subtly attractive rhythm. Tremendous noise was created by the collection of brass gongs of different sizes and tones; drums throbbed in unison and wind instruments cried plaintively. The inevitable array of bottles was set out on the floor and the party started. Hour after hour crept by, we were almost hypnotised, the band played on and

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on; the Dayaks were happy, so very happy and not a bit tired!

The problem of where to sleep had meanwhile been solved by our servants, who with the headman's permission had put up our camp-beds and mosquito-nets in the hall, just a few feet away from the band. And what a beautiful sight these beds were. If only we could get into them! Above the bed hung, not a 'lovely bunch of coconuts', but a large bunch of black, grisly, human skulls, somehow looking forlorn and pathetic. One dear old granny had been holding my hand affectionately, it seemed for hours. She, noticing my upward glance, pointed to the skulls, tapped her forehead, then tapped mine, and roared with laughter. We joined in the general mirth.

At 1 a.m. Dr E, unable to stand it any longer, asked Peter to tell our hosts that we were but women, weak and small, and please might we go to bed as we were very tired after a sleepless night at sea. She begged them, however, not to break up the party. They didn't. It went on until daylight. We slept like logs. We soon got used to sleeping under the skulls and being surrounded by men. I think it should be mentioned that during the whole two weeks not one single snore emerged from the sleeping men. No tossing and turning either, just utter quiet throughout the night. Can anyone think of a reason why?

The following morning when we were refreshed and ready for work an amusing incident occurred. Cyma Dora came to Lisa, looking anxious and rather shy. It seemed that the headman was concerned for our comfort. He wanted us to know that some time ago, when His Excellency the Governor visited them for one night, he had made for him a modern toilet, which was still there at our disposal. Gravely Cyma Dora led us outside, across the shaky slippery verandah. At the outer edge was a small enclosed space, full of natural peep-holes. A creaky door, also full of holes, was opened by our escort and we passed within. This was the abode. We looked around for the modern toilet, and espied a tiny wooden box, about four inches high, with a neat little hole cut out of the centre. Twelve feet below the family pigs grunted expectantly. We were overwhelmed with laughter, albeit suppressed. Feelings must not be hurt. We decided we preferred the bush.

The Dayaks have perfect manners. Not even the children showed any curiosity and no one followed us into the bush. Even though we slept in the public hall, care was always taken that we be given a room in which to bathe and change.

The day passed quickly. Nawi did his blood examinations without fuss and bother. All the women were at home and, with Cyma Dora and Victoria interpreting, we soon got all the information needed.

**T**RAVELLING up river was sheer delight. Five perahus were loaded with ourselves and heavy baggage. Dayaks standing at each end of the long boat poled in perfect harmony. It was a beautiful sight watching the boats rounding the curves, so graceful were the boatmen's movements. The men were good companions and sang their haunting river-songs as they worked. The swiftly-flowing river curled and whirled round the perahus; the lean brown bodies curled gracefully as they poled from side to side; the birds of brilliant plumage flashed past feathery bamboos and huge ancient trees; the sunlight danced on the water and gorgeously-coloured dragon-flies and butterflies alighted on limb and perahu. For a time, serenity and peace of mind was ours. Cramped limbs were forgotten in the æsthetic delight of it all.

After some hours the Dayaks gave a peculiar call. This was followed by tremendous volleys in the near distance. The men called out: 'Samu, Samu.' Looking ahead, we could see the people waiting by the riverside. A very dignified headman greeted us. He proved to be one of nature's perfect gentleman. At the top of the incline the children were gathered in two lines facing each other. At a sign from their teacher they stood stiffly to attention and sang 'God Save The King' in English. We shook each small hand and said in greeting: 'Tabek, tabek.' They replied in English: 'Thank you, madam.' That, and 'yes' and 'no', was their vocabulary. Samu is proud of its school, which serves most of the river. This pride is justified, for we had never met such well-behaved children—and such loving parents, for there were no slappings or scoldings, and never a rude word or display of bad temper from the children. The children stayed up until the unearthly hours of the late parties, but it did not seem to do them any harm,

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for they went off merrily to school in the morning.

Heavy tropical rain caused flooding of the river. It was too dangerous to travel. We were delayed for four days. Fearing to out-stay our welcome, we inquired if we could walk through the jungle. The headman explained that in the wet season the jungle presented hazards. The paths were muddy and slippery; the many bridges over rivers and ravines were nerve-racking to cross, being usually only a single bamboo or trunk of tree with no handrail; a rushing river below and a swaying bridge—no, he could not risk the safety of the European ladies.

On the fourth morning, when our work was completed, the Dayaks decided this was a day for a party. It was still pouring with rain and they were anxious for us to feel welcome, no matter how long we were delayed. We started at room 1, and worked through to room 23, and ended up with the whole house gathered in the headman's quarters. Men, women, and children, all sat on the floor around the bottles. We sang songs in Dayak, Scots, Welsh, and Irish. The children sang 'Clementine', and other songs not easy to distinguish. The atmosphere was charged with friendliness and happiness. We forgot the rain. We heard Dayak myths, fairy-tales, and legends.

Later a handsome Dayak told Peter he wanted to honour us by singing traditional songs of praise. This particular chanting is only done on very special occasions. A long hand-carved, hand-painted staff is held in one hand and in the other is a glass of arrack wine.

The dancer faced Dr E, at some feet away. Step by step, slowly and swinging from side to side, he approached her. He looked and sounded the essence of poetry. Reaching her, he gracefully went down on one knee and with both hands gave her the wine, which she had to drink to the last drop. Each one of us was thus chanted. Peter told us the gist of the words. They were mostly poetical. The dancer likened us to the spirits of the air. We had come, he said, across the seas, over the mountains, and through the air, like birds. He gave us thanks for enduring the hard travel of the rivers and the discomforts of the primitive long-houses. He hoped that after treatment the women would bear many babies, because a long-house without lots of children was a sad place, a very sad place.

Lisa asked Peter on what other occasions this dance was done and he replied: 'For the harvest, weddings, and fertility rites.' Then, looking rather shy, he added: 'Also, most of all, when we bring home the heads.' But he continued hastily: 'We are not doing that just now.' All laughed heartily.

Head-hunting in Sarawak has been suppressed for about one hundred years, but towards the end of the late war it broke out again for a time. Japanese heads hang aloft with the ancients. The heads are the most precious family heirlooms and even the Christians—of whom there are only a few—refuse to part with them.

The rain stopped and during the night the river fell sufficiently for the headman to deem it safe for us to continue our journey. We left with hearts as heavy as the overcast sky. Never will we forget Samu's kind, courteous people.

OUR perahu had five strong men to pole us past the most dangerous part of the river. Shooting through the rapids against the heavy current was thrilling.

The two nights at Danau were quiet and peaceful. The houses were small, and so our work was soon finished.

The weather changed, the sun shone, the birds sang, the river sparkled and laughed. Now it was so low we were poled, paddled, or pushed as became necessary up to Penom, which is on a particularly graceful bend of the river, the site charming, with open space on which cattle graze. Silver rubber-trees stand guardian in their hundreds on either side of the river.

Here a more dramatic greeting awaited us. There was plenty of noise, cannons going off and small boys beating gongs. The headman was grandly dressed in a scarlet-flowered dressing-gown and he bore a huge Union Jack. The maidens, of course, were in their best clothes and much jewellery. It was a colourful scene.

Somehow, in spite of the welcome, Penom was disappointing. There was an undercurrent of sophistication. Here, too, investigations showed a focus of infection as part-cause of the women's troubles. Penom is so advanced and wealthy that electric-lights and also the radio have been installed; also, the heads were missing! We felt safer under the heads in the other houses. The men were

## A MEDICAL TRIP AMONG THE HEAD-HUNTERS OF SARAWAK

crazy about cock-fighting. Magnificent specimens of the unfortunate cocks were tied all along the highway, out on the verandah, under the house—everywhere, it seemed, by the appalling cock-a-doodles that went on all day. For the cocks the day started at 4.30 a.m.; so, too, for us!

Out of our four nights at Penom, one was made memorable by the arrival of about thirty men, Iban-Ulus. The Ibans are another tribe of Sea-Dayaks, distinguished by long hair and heavily-tattooed bodies. Naked save for a loincloth, they are very fond of ornaments, beads, and bangles. Carved pieces of painted bamboo are worn in the large holes in the lobes of their ears. They are shy and modest.

This night, with all gathered together for a party, the headman persuaded some of the Ibans to dance for us. One or two started, but, overcome with shyness, they ran away. Later we saw a spectacular figure walking down the highway—a young Iban dressed in full war regalia. A white turban effect adorned his head; ribbon was draped in his long hair; a handmade coloured-bead choker circled his throat; silver bracelets and many bangles hung on his wrists and legs; around his loins was draped material—scarlet flowers on white background—forming an apron in front and an honest-to-goodness Victorian bustle at the back; in one hand was an ornamental shield, tufted with human hair, and in the other a sword that glinted evilly.

To the quick rhythm of the band he did the beautiful and incredibly graceful war-dance and afterwards a harvest-thanksgiving dance. So fascinating was the latter dance that we later asked him to do it again. He was a real artist and showed his dramatic instinct by improvising more ingenious and graceful movements. That night will live long in our memory.

Our work finished, and all arrangements made for patients to come to Kuching for medical and surgical treatment, we bade farewell to Penom. Four patients returned with us. The people had been kind and helpful, so here, too, we left friends. The sophistication did not go very deep.

**N**EXT morning, away. Down river and stop over for one night at Samu with our friends. Rain fell heavily during the night and in the morning we skimmed along with

the swift current. Far too soon we were at Tanjong. The people greeted us with arrack wine and a toast of 'Hullo, farewell, thank you, and please return soon.'

How unwelcome it was to transfer to the noisy outboard-motor launch! Gone was the peace of the river, gone the coolness and the charm of the jungle.

We hoped to see the dainty *Mariette* waiting for us at Spaoh; instead, we saw a tiny horror, which we named *Cucaracha*, on account of the families of the world's biggest and stickiest cockroaches which it housed. We were a party of eleven, there was no deck-space, and only one tiny cabin with two narrow bunks. Below was a small black hole of Calcutta. Into this both the patients and the staff crowded. With two women in the bunks, the third on the floor, the filthy little vessel sailed in fair weather.

Later a most violent tropical storm broke. The heavens opened, rain poured into the cabin and the hole below. Soon the figure on the floor was soaked, also the pillows, blankets, and clothes. Nothing could be done about it—so to sleep! Sleep was nicely descending, in spite of the raging elements, when, lo, so did the cockroaches! This really was the end. They were enormous creatures, with clinging feet. On went the cabin light, and the three women got busy on the matter of extermination.

Suddenly a jolt, a thump, shouts and yells from the bridge—we were practically on a sandbank. Trees and scrub were brushing the boat. The anchor was dropped. It was much too dangerous to go on. We stayed there until dawn.

Sitting on the bunks, draped in sheets, munching bananas at 2 a.m., we reviewed the events of the past two weeks. A very happy time with the Dayaks who had taken *such* care that neither ourselves nor luggage got wet or damaged. Civilisation met us, and what happened? We got wet, the luggage got wet, much was ruined. The only uncomfortable night we had was on returning into the arms of the West.

Day dawned, the storm was over. The sea was calm. We arrived at Pending in the late afternoon—untidy, tired, and hungry. However, after a hot bath, a good dinner, and much laughter with friends and relations, recounting incidents, we agreed that perhaps there was something to be said in favour of civilisation.



# The Age of the Helicopter

LANGSTON DAY

WHETHER we like it or not, a time is approaching when helicopters will be almost as familiar as cars or lorries, when they will be the favoured means of inter-city travel and the medium of inland transport for passengers who arrive at our coastal airports from abroad.

In days when so much value is attached to speed, it may seem curious that we should be turning to a type of aircraft which can travel little faster than a sports car. Only twenty-five years ago we imagined that the air would soon be crowded with privately-owned aeroplanes. Difficulties of landing and taking off in confined spaces falsified this expectation. To-day, as it has proved, we are thinking more in terms of rotor-planes equivalent to aerial charabancs which can land on rooftops and convey us safely and cheaply from city to city.

The idea of the 'whirly-bird' has been in men's minds for centuries. Something very much like it is among Leonardo da Vinci's famous drawings of flying-machines and it figures in the ancient Chinese flying-top. A small model which actually flew was shown to the Académie des Sciences in 1784. Early in the present century Monsieur Passat made a full-scale machine with flapping wings and Monsieur Moineau a flying-boat which was designed to soar aloft on paddle-wheels.

Our ideas of conquering the air changed direction in 1903 when the Wright brothers proved the strange possibility of flying with fixed wings. This was rather like climbing a mountain by pulling a vehicle forward up an easy gradient instead of hauling it up vertically, so it was much better suited to the less efficient engines of fifty years ago. Stimulated by two World Wars, fixed-wing aviation took a tremendous forward leap, but the difficulty of finding enough space for landings and take-offs increased apace with the enormous speed

of modern aircraft and the growth of populations.

Realising in advance what a handicap this would be, several pioneers remained faithful to helicopters. One of these men was the Russian-born American, Igor Sikorsky, who in 1909 built his first full-scale model when he was only twenty. It was a fine machine, he says now, apart from the fact that it couldn't fly. Another pioneer was Juan de la Cierva, who by 1923 had built his first 'Autogiro', a cross between a helicopter and a fixed-wing plane. At first his machines needed a short run along the ground, but by 1934 they could take off from a standing start. However, they could not rise or land vertically.

For a vertical take-off, a knotty problem was how to prevent the fuselage from spinning round in the opposite direction to the rotor. Multiple contra-rotating rotors were tried with some success, but at length Sikorsky solved the problem by the simple expedient of having a small propeller set sideways, which acted as a rudder.

To-day Sikorskys are the favoured make of machine in America, and in this country they are being built under licence for the R.A.F. and the Army. But in the last few years a number of new designs have come into the field. At least fifty different types of helicopter have passed the blue-print stage and a good many of them are coming into production. They range from craft which can carry thirty or more passengers to sky-scooters weighing 100 pounds and capable, it is said, of lifting four times their own weight; from twin-engined, twin-rotored Bristols and machines with jet-driven blades to the small but silent French Djinn whose rotor is driven by compressed air generated by a gas-turbine.

A novel means of propulsion is the ram-jet, a variant of the power-unit which propelled our old friend the doodlebug. In 1954



## THE AGE OF THE HELICOPTER

there was news of a helicopter designed by the German Professor Focke, which ascends vertically and then extends its wings from the fuselage—a machine which is said to be capable of travelling 330 miles an hour. Perhaps the strangest craft of all is the so-called 'flying bedstead', which has neither wings nor rotors, but consists merely of jet-engines at each end of the 'bed', with jet nozzles underneath it. This curious contraption lands on four spindly, tubular legs, and, although it weighs  $3\frac{1}{2}$  tons, it can rise, circle round, and land vertically under complete control.

THE experts say that the helicopter has just about reached the stage attained by the fixed-wing plane thirty years ago. Judged by this standard, it has an extraordinary record up to the present, surpassing that of the aeroplane on pretty nearly every count, speed excepted. It is manoeuvrable to an unusual degree.

Six years ago Trinity House, after making many unsuccessful attempts to relieve the crew of the Wolf Rock lighthouse off Land's End, called in the aid of a helicopter. In appalling weather a Westland Sikorsky hovered over the lighthouse while 250 pounds of provisions were successfully lowered to the crew by a hydraulically-operated winch. This was not only a tribute to the handiness of the machine but also to the skill of the pilot, for a helicopter is operated by four primary control levers instead of the three used in an aeroplane. More recently, in November of last year, the sole survivor of the South Goodwin lightship was bravely rescued by an American helicopter.

In the terrible Netherlands floods of 1953 some forty helicopters flew in from six different countries and between them saved about 2000 victims, which was more than the number saved by all other means combined. Hovering over the submerged houses, with haystacks adrift and terrified animals running hither and thither to escape from the rising floods, they descended on the exhausted human survivors who waved to them from rooftops and windmills and took them to safety. One gallant pilot of ours who saved nearly 200 lives had Queen Juliana for a passenger on several of his trips. Prince Bernhard went up nearly every day and ended by giving a helicopter party at the Palace.

Nearer home, during the disrupting snow-storms of January and February of this year,

helicopters did valuable service in dropping provisions, fuel, and cattle-fodder to isolated farms and communities in many parts of Britain, and particularly in the northern counties of Scotland. Further, the sick were carried to hospital by helicopter.

No other machine is so admirably suited to rescue work. Hundreds of our sick and wounded men have been evacuated in the Malaya fighting, and it is said that 25,000 lives were saved by helicopters in Korea. One small detachment of ten U.S. Sikorskys is officially credited with the rescue of 7000. Injured pilots who had crashed were brought back from as far as 125 miles behind the enemy lines, and blood transfusions were performed during the return flights. In Malaya rotor-planes have hovered over dense forests of 200-foot trees and hauled sick men aboard with winches.

They have picked up men clinging to buoys or ice-floes, men who were stranded in the desert. They have transferred serious medical cases aboard ship direct to hospitals. In Korea, helicopters protected by fighters brought back a complete MIG which the experts were particularly anxious to examine after it had been shot down behind the enemy lines. A crew landed and cut up the MIG into convenient pieces, which were then fixed to the bottoms of the helicopters.

Helicopters of the Royal Navy dropped 2000 troops and police in the jungles of Pahang to trap a band of terrorists, while in Korea a whole brigade engaged in a three-day battle on a mountain-top was supplied continuously by 700 helicopter lifts.

It is feats such as these which have convinced the military authorities that the helicopter is an absolutely indispensable instrument of war, and already the fighting services have spent far more money on these machines than could possibly have been found by commercial concerns.

The Americans say that, with 11 divisions in the field, 450 helicopters each capable of lifting 7 tons could replace 8000 lorries and 20,000 men. They could be used for commando raids, and after an atomic attack there is probably no means other than the helicopter of evacuating civilian survivors. Among many possible naval uses, helicopters can rapidly skim the water towing asdic devices for spotting submarines, and the larger machines can follow up spottings with direct attacks.

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**I**N the United States, helicopters are at present used chiefly in civilian life for transporting mails from post-offices to the nearest fixed-wing airport. In this country an experimental mail service in East Anglia achieved a regularity of 98.4 per cent during the hours of daylight. Sabena Airways in Belgium has been operating a mail service for two years. The heliports are always within 500 or 1000 yards of the post-office. The latest rotor-plane station in Brussels is actually on the roof of the new seven-floor post-office building.

Sabena also started a passenger service in September of last year, carrying passengers at a cost of some 6d. a mile in twenty-seater machines and rather more in smaller ones. So far, although thousands of landings have been made in the heart of Brussels, there has not been a single complaint about the noise.

Perhaps the ears of Londoners are more sensitive, for already there has been something of an outcry about the din and clatter of helicopters on the south bank of the Thames. Our first passenger services between London, Northolt, and the south began in June 1954, but far bigger things are planned for the next five or ten years.

At present the congestion among fixed-wing aircraft arriving from abroad is so great that there are times when airliners at various altitudes are queueing up to land all the way from the south coast to London Airport. In the future it is hoped that helicopters will help to disperse this traffic to the coasts. There will probably be three main coastal airports, perhaps near Bristol, Liverpool, and Manston (west of Ramsgate), to take the air traffic arriving from the west, east, and south; and these will be followed by further airports as and when required. Big forty-seater helicopters capable of cruising at 150 or 200 miles an hour will be waiting to convey the passengers to London and other destinations.

Another service which will no doubt be developed is from city centre to city centre. This will relieve some of the rail traffic, and compared with inter-city airplane travel it will have the great advantage of cutting out

the journey by bus between airport and city. Allowing for this, it is reckoned that in actual time of travel a helicopter cruising at 150 m.p.h. could match a jet-plane flying at 4600 m.p.h.!

Various ideas are being considered for landing-strips. One of them is rooftop heli-dromes above existing railway-stations, such as Cannon Street or Charing Cross, with giant hydraulic lifts for raising and lowering the rotor-planes. Another is pontoon stations on lakes or estuarine sites. It has even been suggested that platforms on piles might be built against the banks of the Thames between Waterloo and Southwark Bridges. Whatever arrangements are made, it is believed that in ten years' time helicopters will be almost as popular as buses. New York reckons on 3 million passenger-trips by 1965. Perhaps London will not be far behind.

**T**HE possibilities of the helicopter go far beyond what has been touched upon in this article. In Trinidad, Kenya, the Sudan, and elsewhere these machines have been used to dust sugar-cane with D.D.T. and spray cotton and other crops, despite the dangers of collisions with dust-devils and big carnivorous birds.

Near Vancouver 400,000 pounds of equipment and supplies needed for building a dam were flown 5 miles and landed on a shelf 15 feet square cut in the face of a 3000-foot precipice. A complete village of twenty-five huts has been transported to a mountain site. Thieves have been trailed and caught, forest fires have been fought, cables have been laid and volcanoes inspected. A helicopter which is used to round up cattle on the Wagoner Ranch in Texas, one of the biggest ranches in the world, is said to do the work of fifteen cowboys.

Perhaps the most fantastic use of these machines to date was in a square dance performed by four U.S. helicopters dressed in skirts at the National Aero Show at Dayton, Ohio. They dipped, turned, crossed, and set to partners with all the aplomb of experienced dancers.



## Nuts and May

MEX TUTHILL

(Author of *Golf Without Gall*)

**B**ASIL BLATHER-WICK 'was full of brooding pessimism when he ran his car into the carpark at the Werton Golf Club. For nearly a month his golf had been deplorable. Not only was he slicing badly with his driver, but he was also topping his irons, shanking his approaches, while his putting would have brought a blush of maidenly shame to the cheeks of an elderly lady with no L.G.U. handicap.

He had plumbed the depths of the bunker of depression, so it was without pleasure that he returned the hearty greeting of the club captain, who exclaimed: 'You're just the man I was looking for, Blather-Wick. We're one short for the mixed foursomes. Get changed as quickly as possible. I've got a partner in a million for you.'

'Mixed foursomes?' Basil gasped. 'But I—'

'I know. You're off your game. So am I, but it's only a mixed foursome. The Ladies' Committee want it, and when they want anything very badly, they have to have it. Now run and get changed, there's a good chap, and come to the aid of the party.'

**W**HEN Basil was introduced to May Conway on the first tee, he shook hands,

and immediately wished he hadn't, for she had a grip that paralysed his fingers. She was a big, healthy girl with bright blue eyes, pink cheeks, and flaxen hair, who simply fizzed with vitality like a fresh soda-syphon.

'Glad to have you as a partner, Mr Blather-Wick. 'Fraid I'm not really a golfer. I'm no good with woods, but I'm not too bad punching 'em along with irons. Hope you're not a scratch man?'

Basil shook his head miserably. 'As a matter of fact, I'm a bit off form at the moment.'

'Never mind. Just bang your drives down the middle and I'll swot 'em with my three iron. Get a fair distance with it. Anyway, we needn't worry—it's only a game.'

Basil drove out of bounds, then May teed up a ball and punched it a good hundred and fifty yards with her number three. Basil topped it a few miserable yards with his number two, then his partner banged it on the green. It stopped dead two feet from the tin and Basil promptly missed the putt.

After this inauspicious start one would have thought that May would have been a little cool towards her partner, but she only laughed and again mentioned that it was only a game. Basil's heart warmed towards her immediately. She was, as the captain had said, a girl in a

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million, and as the game proceeded he decided a million wasn't enough; she was undoubtedly a girl in at least a billion.

Through all the vicissitudes of the game she continued to laugh as she smacked the ball heartily with her never-failing number three, while Basil tried desperately to pull one good shot out of the bag to show her he wasn't quite the broken peg he appeared to be.

The blackest of clouds always has a bit of silver lining tucked away somewhere, and the cloud that overhung Basil's golf showed a corner of its lining at the seventeenth. Here, by fortunate accident, he kept his left arm straight, his eye on the ball, and, timing the ball perfectly, hit a beauty straight down the middle. His partner put him on the green, then, his luck still holding, he sank a ten-yard putt.

With just a *soupsçon* of uppishness in the eye, he watched her drive off the last tee and get her usual one-fifty-yards. He was now faced with a two-hundred-yarder to the green, so with grim determination he gripped his number two wood and fairly clouted the ball in the general direction of the flag. To his utter amazement, it ran on the green straight to the cup and holed out.

'Oh, jolly good shot, partner!' May cried. 'A birdie at the seventeenth and an eagle here! A few more holes like these and we'd have won hands down.'

But eleventh-hour form at golf never cancels the sins of the earlier holes, and when the cards were checked it was found that May and Basil had the highest score. As was the custom, they were formally presented with large wooden spoons decorated with bows of appropriately coloured pink and blue ribbon and had to endure the ribald laughter of the luckier competitors.

After massaging his fingers, crushed by the warm and friendly good-bye of his partner, Basil drove home with his wooden spoon mutely reminding him of the multitude of mistakes he had made in the game, but, even so, one pleasing thought remained in his mind—his partner had never once criticised his play. 'May's a damn good sport,' he muttered as he went to bed.

and he felt a keen desire to meet her again. To his great disappointment it began to rain and he knew there was little chance of her appearing. There was only one other man in the clubhouse, and he sat at the same table, when Basil had tea, with a glass of milk and a parcel of sandwiches. Basil gazed at him curiously, for it was most unusual for anyone to bring his own food to the clubhouse, where the catering was very good. His companion, sensing his surprise, remarked: 'I am a nutarian and have to bring my own fodder.'

Basil, with a large plateful of cold ham in front of him, was still more surprised, for the stranger looked the picture of health. He had always imagined nutarians and queer people of that kind to be pale, bespectacled folk with hungry and fanatical eyes like those of untipped caddies, but the man on the other side of the table looked as though he had just returned from a happy holiday in sunny Spain. 'B-but you look quite fit,' he stammered.

'Of course I look fit. You'd look fit, too, if you munched some of these delicious nut sandwiches instead of that bit of dead pig you're poisoning yourself with.'

'You—er—don't think I look fit?'

'I do not. You're tall and should weigh about twelve stone at least, but I bet you don't clock up more than ten and a half. When you wake in the mornings I should say you feel half-dead, whereas I simply leap out of bed, sprint to the bathroom and plunge into lovely icy water. Then ten minutes with my dumb-bells, and after that, do I enjoy my nuts and fruit? I'd say I do!'

Basil slowly ate his ham. The stranger was right. When he reluctantly struggled to consciousness in the mornings he usually felt more than a little corpse-like. Certainly he never *sprang* out of bed. A tentative toe cautiously touching the bedside rug, the dragging of his reluctant body from the bed, a few yawns before he had his cup of tea and a cigarette, that was his usual start for the day.

The stranger continued: 'Once I was an ordinary man like you. I couldn't hit my drives—my meat-misted eye never let me see the ball clearly enough. I dragged myself wearily round my golf course, topping, slicing, shanking. Then one day I saw the light!'

'What light?'

'The light of right living, of course. In a word—nutarianism.'

ON the following afternoon he decided to have tea at the club-house, for there was always the chance that May might be there,

'And did it improve your golf?'

'It did so immediately, and since then I've learnt this important fact about the game—most of our leading professionals and top amateurs are nutarians. That's how they manage to lift all the prizes and pots.'

Basil gaped. 'I've never seen that mentioned in any golf magazine.'

The stranger laughed. 'Of course you haven't. If that secret were broadcast, every golfer would be on the trail to the tiger country. Take it from me, however, if you gave up—excuse my forthrightness—your cannibalistic habits, and embraced the natural regime of nutarianism, cups would clutter your sideboard like windfall apples in a windy orchard.'

'D'you actually mean I'd win cups if I chewed nuts?'

'Chewing nuts isn't enough. You'd have to give up meat and fish, stop smoking, become teetotal, have cold baths in the mornings, and take daily systematic exercise as well.'

Basil frowned. 'Hardly seems worth all the trouble.'

His companion dropped a nut sandwich on his plate with a petulant thud. 'Hardly worth all the trouble! Do you realise what you're missing? With the bounding health, the vitality, the clear eye that only nutarianism can give you, who knows to what golfing heights you may rise. Just imagine your delirious joy if you became the first amateur in years to win the Open Championship!'

'The Open?' Basil gasped, his mouth emulating the title. 'No, not the Open. I couldn't possibly imagine that.'

'Well then, the Amateur, or, if you think that's still too long a shot, the County Championship. Just fancy seeing your name in the papers as captain of the county team.'

'Well, of course, I'd be very proud, but—'

'You prefer the fleshpots?'

Basil pushed away his plate. 'If I were sure I'd win the County Championship, I'd give your plan a trial.'

'Good man! Now, what you need is a simple but comprehensive scheme of right living.'

'The gen on nuts?'

'Exactly. And there's only one sure way you can get it—buy some books on the subject.' He leaned confidentially over the table and whispered in a voice pregnant with mystery: 'I am Alastair McWhat, the Hospodar of Health, author of *Beautiful*

*Bodies*, *Herculean Health*, *I've Gone Nuts*, etc., etc.'

Basil gazed at the Hospodar in awe. He had never met one before, he did not know what the title implied, but he was as shaken as he had been when he accidentally bumped into Dai Rees at an Open Championship and Dai apologised.

The Hospodar suddenly leapt from his chair and picked up a bag from which he produced four small books. 'With these,' he announced, 'you're on the first tee of the course of happy health. The price is 6s. 6d. each, or the four volumes for £1.'

The bright blue eyes of the Hospodar broke down Basil's sales resistance immediately. He meekly produced his wallet and became the possessor of the small library.

'I shall look forward keenly to seeing your name in the golf headlines, Mr —er—?'

'Blather-Wick.'

'Read every word in these books, eat nuts, breathe deeply, work like a galley-slave at the exercises, and the engravers will soon be working overtime marking silver pots with your name. Good-bye and good luck, Mr Wick.' With a handshake that forcibly reminded him of May's, the Hospodar of Health picked up his bag and made his tempestuous way from the room.

Basil breathed deeply and nodded solemnly to his books. 'The County Championship!' he muttered. 'That would please May!'

OF course, Basil did not carry out all the instructions in the books he had bought, but he did give up meat, fish, and alcohol, performed a few exercises, ate pounds of nuts, and even went so far as to have a cold sponge-down in the mornings. To his surprise, he felt fitter, but whenever he smelt the appetising smell of chops cooking, his mouth watered, and it was only the thought of the County Championship that kept him on the hard paths of nutarianism.

He felt very restless, so he played more golf, solemnly chewing nuts and sternly turning his eyes away from the sheep on the course, which, to his mind, represented so many chops and legs of mutton. With all this extra practice his game began to improve, and he decided that the Hospodar had put him on the beginning of the difficult track to the tiger country.

He met May several times in the town, and



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each time they met the more desirable she seemed. She was always delighted to see him, and he decided that it was only a question of time before he could tell her that she was his favourite shot in the game of love. As an old and rather possessive aunt was staying with May, she couldn't fix up a game of golf with him, but he continued to practise in order to astonish her with his skill when they did meet again on the course.

ONE afternoon his particular friend, young Jones, turned up at the golf club and they played a full round. Basil was on his very best form, and to his own amazement, and to Jones's surprise, he beat him on the last green on handicap terms.

'Best game I've seen you play for months,' his partner remarked. 'What have you been up to—having lessons or reading some up-to-date vade-mecum of the game?'

'Just been having a bit of extra practice, that's all.'

'To impress your new girl-friend, I suppose.'

'New girl-friend?'

'May Conway, of course. The girl I've seen you chasing after so many times recently. Your wooden spoon partner in the mixed foursomes. I don't blame you, of course. She's a darned good sport is May, and a nice girl too. Runs a bit to flesh, I'll admit, but it's quite proper in her case.'

'I don't know what you mean.'

'Don't you know who her father is?'

'No. I didn't even know she had one.'

'Every nice girl has a father. May's, by the way, is the Chairman of Conways, the firm that controls that huge chain of meat-shops. If you hitch up with May, you'll never be short of juicy steaks, tender chops, and a whacking big Sunday joint. Dash it all, I think I'll have a shot at her myself in case rationing comes back.'

With watering mouth, Basil followed his friend into the clubhouse, trying to put out of his mind the thought of tender chops and juicy steaks.

'Tea is on me,' Jones announced. 'Now, as I feel a bit peckish, my vote is for ham and eggs. What d'you fancy?'

'Well—er—I'm on a diet. I've brought something with me.'

Jones stared at him. 'On a diet, eh? Never heard you complain of tummy trouble before. Love upsetting the old digestive

juices, I expect. What does the doctor say is wrong?'

'Er—I haven't seen the doctor. It's a sort of diet a chap put me on to. I'm just giving it a try-out.'

'And you've no indignation?'

'None.'

'Then it seems damned silly to go on a diet. Well, I'm ordering ham and eggs. What d'you want?'

'Just a glass of milk.'

Jones shook his head significantly and looked with great interest at the parcel of sandwiches Basil produced. 'That your diet?'

Basil began to feel a little peeved with his friend's morbid curiosity. 'If you want the truth, I'm on a nut diet.'

Jones smiled tolerantly. 'Just the job. Working your way into the nuthouse by the front-door, eh?'

'Sneer as much as you like, young Jones, but I can tell you this—you'd have played a better game to-day if you'd toned up your system with a pound or two of nuts.'

'I would, would I! Then let me tell you I'd rather lose and stuff myself with ham and eggs, than win and look as hungry and miserable as you.'

Jones ate his ham and eggs with gusto, while Basil nibbled his nut sandwiches morosely as the appetising odour of fried ham almost drove him crazy.

When Jones, with a sigh of satisfaction, lit a cigarette, he remarked: 'There's one point you've overlooked, my poor, misguided nut-chewer. What will our friend May have to say when she finds you're a food faddist? In my opinion, she'll give you the quick brush-off, and who could blame her?'

Basil had not considered May's reaction to his new diet, so he was quite alarmed. 'You mean, she might have an objection to my eating nuts?'

'She certainly will. She's not a squirrel, she's a normal, healthy girl, and her type simply hates any departure from the orthodox in food matters. If you're really keen on the girl, I'd advise you to hop off the nut-wagon and jump on the meat-lorry again without wasting a moment.'

ON the following morning Basil took his friend's advice and had bacon and eggs for breakfast. At lunchtime he ate two grilled chops with great appetite and pleasure. Full



of food and the milk of human kindness, he went to the golf club and, to his delight, saw May on the verandah. She agreed with alacrity to have a game with him, so whistling happily he dashed to the locker-room for his clubs.

As they played, he stole appreciative glances at his partner. She looked like an O.S. poster-girl advertising the bracing ozone of some seaside resort. Admittedly, as Jones had said, she did not lack flesh, but Basil realised that girls were, like golf-clubs, of different sizes, and some were quite naturally more powerful and bigger than others. As the game progressed, to the accompaniment of her happy laughter, he decided that at last he had met someone with whom he could be perfectly happy in the hazardous twosome of marriage.

He changed quickly when they reached the clubhouse and had a private word with the stewardess. 'Ham and eggs for two,' he whispered urgently, slipping a generous tip into her willing palm, 'and don't spare the horses. We're really hungry, so make it a full drive, not a short approach.'

At the moment when May came from the ladies' locker-room, the stewardess appeared from the kitchen proudly bearing a huge platter of ham and eggs and placed it ceremoniously on their table.

'Ah, that smells good,' Basil remarked happily. 'I hope you're as peckish as I am.'

To his utter surprise, May did not smile. She gazed at the sizzling ham and eggs with noticeable coldness, then looked rather oddly at Basil. 'I never eat meat of any kind, Mr Blather-Wick. I'd like a green salad, or, failing that, just brown bread and butter.'

'But,' he gasped, 'I thought—'

'Because I'm pretty hefty, and my dad is in the business he is in, you naturally thought I'd stuff myself with meat? If you want to know, I've been a vegetarian for the past five years.'

Basil, knocked right off his pivot, ordered a green salad, then helped himself liberally to ham and eggs. May watched him in silence for a time, then she remarked: 'That Jones man, is he a friend of yours?'

'Yes. Why?'

'He told me last night you lived solely on nuts. I was so glad, for, being a vegetarian myself, I thought we had something in common, but—'

'But what?'

'Oh, it doesn't matter. I suppose it takes all sorts to make a world!'

After this pregnant remark, May relapsed into silence. She ate her green salad fastidiously, while Basil stolidly continued to pack away his ham and eggs. He had always believed that one should concentrate on the job in hand, so he did not notice that May's coldness had become a deep-freeze. When he finished at last, however, with a sigh of intense satisfaction, he caught her eye, and its coldness shook him like the first sight of a ball in a bad lie in wet rough. 'What's the matter?' he exclaimed in agitation. 'Have I offended you?'

May tapped her foot with marked impatience. 'You haven't *offended* me—I think disgusted me is the more fitting term.'

'I—'

'The horrible way you gulped that ham made me think I was having a meal with a cannibal chief, and the worst part about it was you thoroughly enjoyed your beastly feast.'

'But it was jolly good ham. I—'

'I was beginning to like you very much, but now—Ah, well, as I said before, it takes all sorts—'

'To make a world! I heard you the first time.' Basil gazed at her dispassionately and in a mood of criticism, for he strongly resented her remarks about cannibal chiefs and beastly feasts. She had a much more determined chin than he had realised. He could quite plainly see that life with her would be a long and weary trek through marshy meadows of green salads—and of all the shots in the eating game he loathed green salads. He lit a cigarette and frowned.

'Do you not realise that eating meat is a form of slow poisoning, whereas a crisp lettuce and a juicy tomato are nature's purest food. You smoke, too. Surely you know that human lungs were meant to breathe pure air and—'

But Basil had borne enough. He'd already suffered in the purgatory into which the Hospodar of Health had thrust him. 'For three weeks I lived on nuts like a blasted squirrel. I did not smoke or drink, and I felt utterly miserable. I did it for you.'

'For me? I can't see how I came into it.'

'A man I met told me that living on nuts and all the rest of it would improve my golf, so I tried it out as I thought if I played a better game you would think I wasn't quite

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the out-of-bounder I appeared to be when first we met.'

'But I didn't care two hoots how you played. As a fact, I only play golf myself for exercise. I don't really care for the game. In my opinion mucking around the course is only a nice walk spoilt.'

Basil looked at her in amazement as she voiced this heresy. 'You don't really like golf?'

'No, I never have. The only thing about it is one can breathe in fresh air deeply without people remarking about it. I shouldn't lose any sleep if I never saw a golf-club again.'

A faint smile flickered for a moment on her lips. 'Except my number three iron, of course. I've had some useful exercise with it.' She glanced at her watch and rose. 'Heavens, is that the time? I'll have to fly. I'm giving a talk about salads at the Women's Institute to-night. Good-bye.'

Basil watched her sail out of his life like a stately liner putting out to sea. But he watched her departure without regret, for once more he realised the essential truth that women and golf, like drinks at the nineteenth, should never be mixed—unless one is asking for trouble.

# Winds of the Mediterranean

JOHN WILLIAMS

FEW visitors to the French Riviera have not felt the mistral, the cold wind that blusters down from the Rhône valley, sweeping the sky a clearer and more brilliant blue, whipping up unaccustomed white horses on the sea, and setting shutters banging and dusty palm-fronds clashing all along the coast from Marseilles to Cannes and beyond. It is the bane of that balmy shore, a harsh intruder from the chillier lands of the north.

At Marseilles the mistral blows, on an average, for 110 days in the year, mostly in the winter or spring, and sometimes it continues for a week, rising occasionally to a speed of seventy miles an hour and now and again sending the thermometer below freezing. Cypress-hedges are planted to shield gardens and orchards from its cutting blast and houses are sited to give as much protection as possible from it. It is among the most notorious of all the winds that ruffle the limpid waters of the Mediterranean and prove this romantic inland sea to be not so storm-free and serene as it is often painted.

Local and regional winds, as opposed to the

great wind systems of the oceans, are a marked feature of the Mediterranean. They are, of course, part of the general pattern of the Mediterranean climate—the winter 'lows' that move in from the Atlantic or form over the individual basins of the sea, and the more stable anticyclonic build-up of the summer, with pressure highest to the north-west and lowest to the south-east. But these winds are also strongly influenced by the mountains, valleys, and deserts that in various places border the Mediterranean shores. Blowing dry and moist, hot and cold, they may bring a touch of Africa to Europe or a breath of northern winter to seaboard where the palm, the cactus, the citrus, and the olive flourish. And unlike the anonymous winds that box the compass over, say, Britain, they all, from Spain to Asia Minor and Trieste to North African Tripoli, have their own distinctive and traditional names.

SOUTHERN FRANCE has, for instance, besides the mistral—nothing to do with

## WINDS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

the Provençal poet, but a form of the Italian *maestrale*, meaning masterful—that northerly wind, the bise, that blows cold and dry from the mountains, but differs from the mistral in bringing heavy clouds. It also has the marin, the warm damp sea-wind from the stormy Gulf of Lions that envelops the Narbonne region with stifling humidity.

When the marin penetrates a little further inland, it loses its moisture, to become the dry hot autan of Toulouse; and its arid southerly breath is known and dreaded as far as Lyons. Two hundred years ago a Frenchman wrote of it: 'This wind is hot and oppressive, it enervates and overpowers men and animals. It makes the head heavy, takes away all appetite, and seems to distend the whole body.' The writer might be describing the sirocco, and, indeed, there is more than a touch of the sirocco in this humid, subtropical airstream.

Spain's Mediterranean coast has its quota of local winds too—like the moist, muggy, easterly levanter, which particularly affects the Strait of Gibraltar. It was the levanter that covered the Rock with a muffling pall of cloud during one morning of the Queen's visit there last May. Blowing more violently, from a more northerly point, are the winds of spring and autumn known as the levantades; while, again, from the east comes the rainy solano.

Winter often brings to Gibraltar and the east coast of Spain the vendavales, south-west winds accompanied by thunderstorms. But rain and damp are not the only things borne on the winds that blow in these parts. Sand and dust from Africa arrive on the dry, scorching leveche that hits the Spanish coast between Almería and Valencia. This is similar to the leste, the desert wind that is felt in the Strait, along the North African shores, and even in Madeira, and heralds an advancing depression from the west.

Corsicans know best of all the libeccio, the west or south-west wind that prevails in northern Corsica throughout the year. They also know the tramontana, the northerly winter wind, clear like the mistral, that blows down from the mountains on to Italy's west coast too. And the Gulf of Genoa, like the Gulf of Lions, has its own mistral (*maestrale*), which streams from the Lombardy plain to strike Genoa harbour with violent gusts.

When air from a high-pressure system in the Balkans flows out to fill a depression over

North Africa, Malta experiences the gregale—'the wind from Greece'. Sometimes the gregale clears the skies of cloud, and sometimes it brings rain and mist; and sailors dislike it because it piles formidable seas into Malta's north-facing harbours and causes serious trouble to shipping.

Across in the Adriatic they have a north-west wind, hardly more than a fresh breeze, which blows in summer and is called the maestro; and very different is this fine-weather wind from the dreaded Adriatic bora—the classical Boreas, or north wind. Pulled down from an anticyclone in the Balkan mountains into a depression in the Adriatic, this fierce biting blast, sometimes blowing at over 100 miles an hour, is the winter scourge of the Dalmatian coast from Trieste to Albania; and in Trieste, where it occurs on an average of thirty-nine days a year, it forces ships to leave their anchorage and seek refuge further down the coast. Its piercing cold is felt, too, in north-eastern Italy, to which it generally brings leaden skies and squally snow-showers.

Even beyond the Mediterranean, bora is something of a generic name, for in at least two remoter regions—the north-east shores of the Black Sea and Egypt's Gulf of Aqaba—it is used to describe local winds of a similar kind. On the other hand, a comparable wind, cold and dry, blowing down the Vardar valley in Greece to the north Aegean has the specific name of vardarac.

ONE of the most ill-reputed winds of the whole Mediterranean is that which blows northwards from the hot deserts of North Africa and Egypt, the sirocco. Circulating in the forefront of depressions travelling eastwards along the Mediterranean, it is widespread enough to have several local names—chili in Tunisia, ghibli in Tripoli, khamsin in Egypt and Malta, simoom in Syria; and the leveche (already mentioned) of south-east Spain is but another variant of the sirocco.

On the African coast the dust-laden sirocco—most prevalent in spring—is very dry and hot, giving temperatures as high as 110 degrees Fahrenheit; but as it crosses the sea it gathers moisture, to become humid and enervating. Its sticky breath may be felt in almost gale force in the Adriatic and Aegean, where they call it the gharbi. But perhaps it reaches the

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height of unpleasantness in northern Sicily, for here its parching heat is intensified by its descent from the mountains to the coast.

'The air is misty,' writes a German geographer describing the Sicilian *sirocco*, 'the sky yellowish to leaden, filled with heavy vapours, through which the sun can be seen only as a pale disc, if at all. Man feels languid and oppressed, and disinclined for mental activity, and animals also suffer from these hot dry winds . . . When the *sirocco* is specially hot, its scorching breath does great injury to the vegetation; the leaves of the trees curl up and fall off in a few days, and if it sets in when the olive trees and vines are in blossom a whole year's harvest may be lost.'

As the *khamisin*, it is the curse of the spring months in Egypt, producing sudden sandstorms of thirty-five miles an hour. And in Syria and Arabia it appears as the violent oven-hot *simoom* in which, as one writer puts it, 'the air seems to glow'.

*Siroccos* are most frequent in the western part of the Mediterranean, occurring on about fifty days in the year, because it is in this area that the depressions which attract them are commonest. Here there is no summer close season for them as there is in the eastern Mediterranean, virtually depression-free from June to October. Indeed, it is from a precisely opposite quarter from the *sirocco* that the summer wind blows in the Levant, cool, dry, steady as a trade, and sometimes with gale force—the famous northerly *etesian*.

The *etesian* winds, anticyclonic airstreams flowing towards the North African and Egyptian coasts, were well known to the ancient Greeks. The Turks call them *meltemi*; and everywhere they bring cloudless skies and temper the fierce summer heat. But rising as they sometimes do to a speed of forty-five miles an hour, they raise white-capped seas heavy enough to make sailing dangerous and carry dust-clouds over the Greek countryside, rendering Athens a far from pleasant place in summer.

How the *etesians* dominate the *Ægean* in the summer months is described by another German writer. 'On the islands of the Greek Archipelago the north winds blow with

such force in summer', he says, 'that in many places trees cannot grow on the high ground. . . . Here the sky is deep-blue, and the sea appears indigo, almost black, as the waves roll along with silver crests from which the wind tears shreds of foam. But in winter, storms are much more frequent in the Mediterranean, and then the winds are changeable and the weather is overcast and rainy. Small vessels are far more afraid of the veering winds of the winter storms than of the *etesian* winds of summer, which are constant in direction, but often so strong that it is impossible to sail north against them.'

These same *etesians*, picking up moisture on their southward passage over the sea, lose their crystal clarity and bring fog and mist to Algeria and Tunis. But at least they mitigate the summer heat of the North African coast.

**I**N these strikingly-named winds of the Mediterranean there is a link between past and present. Ancient Greek legend says that the *etesians* were sent by the gods to cool the drought-stricken Cyclades islands. Boreas, the north wind, whose Latin name was *Aquilo*, figured in classical myth, too. The Greeks and Romans, in fact, venerated their winds and on the 1st-century Tower of the Winds at Athens the winds are depicted in human forms. They all had their special personalities and names.

There was *Zephyrus*, the spring-like west wind (Latin, *Favonius*); *Eurus*, east or south-east; *Notus*, south (Latin, *Auster*); and in the Temple of the *Tempestates* (Weather-Goddesses) at Rome white animals were sacrificed to the beneficent winds and black animals to the stormy ones.

It may be pleasant to picture the Mediterranean as always smooth and shimmering, a sea that looks eternally like the highly-coloured postcards of the Côte d'Azur. Heaven be praised, it is often enough like that. But its winds, so expressively labelled, are just as much part of its tradition and character. They add a touch of caprice and a dash of waywardness to its otherwise tranquil beauty.

# Midnight Sultan

## *Mulai Ismail of Morocco and His Infamies*

MARGARET McCARTNEY

PERHAPS it is fitting that, in the Land of the Crescent Moon, it is moonlight alone that can evoke again the greatness of Meknes, the city of the Sultan of Darkness, and breathe life into the pale ghost that was once the most radiant jewel in Mulai Ismail's crown of cities. For this city, born of the travail of a Sultan's dreams, tells in its very stones the glory and infamy of a reign that has left for ever its scar upon the living flesh of history. While this great city stands sentinel upon its ancient hill, Morocco can never forget the Sultan who brought both honour and shame, beauty and degradation, to its people.

MULAI ISMAIL ruled Morocco from 1672 to 1727, during one of the most illustrious periods of international history. During his reign of fifty-five years he shared the world of kings with Charles II, James II, William and Mary, Queen Anne and George I of England, Louis XIV and Louis XV of France, and Charles II and Philip V of Spain. This was an era when sovereigns ruled in untold splendour, and there was still a veil of mystery which hung between the two worlds of the East and West.

This most famous of all the rulers of Morocco was the son of a father directly descended from the Prophet Mohammed's daughter and of a misshapen Sudanese slave who came to the father while he was imprisoned. From such a liaison was born the mighty Ismail, who at the age of twenty-six came to a troubled throne—the chosen of eighty-three brothers.

This young ruler of Morocco had been born in conflict and nurtured in strife. His plaything was a scimitar, and his favourite pastime, even as a child, was to behead the nearest

slave to test the keenness of the weapon's blade.

Ismail, when he became Sultan, decided to move the capital from Fez to the little town of Meknes. His reasons probably were twofold. First, Fez, where he had previously been viceroy, had been a centre of many uprisings among those who hotly disputed his right to the throne. Second, Meknes, unlike Fez and ancient Marrakesh, had never known the glories of the Court, and here he would build a new world for himself and a magnificent city which would stand for ever as memorial to the 'long and glorious reign of the greatest of all the Sultans.'

And so, Ismail, Sultan of Morocco, set out for his new capital. As he looked across the fertile valley in the shadow of the Middle Atlas, and saw this town set upon its silent hill, he had his first vision of a new Meknes whose glory should vie with that of Versailles, whose walls should compass it about with strength, and whose royal palace should surpass all the richest dwellings of the world in splendour. Never should the world, or history, admit that the Roi Soleil had eclipsed the radiance of the Sultan of the Crescent Moon.

ONCE inside the gates, Ismail began his feverish building of the city. His was a boundless energy that was governed by no plans, and he poured into his new city the fanatical passions of a madman. With his Black Guards, to whom alone he entrusted his personal safety, he would walk the walls of the city, scimitar in hand, severing the heads of his less hardy slaves as a gardener might cut back the branches of his bushes. To him, all human life, save his own, was of



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no consequence, and there was never any lack of fresh slaves, for the Sallee Rovers, who spread terror over all the seas between North Africa and the Cornish coast, could always be relied upon to bring more captives from the ships they had plundered, together with the loot.

Thus, the walls of Meknes, twenty-seven miles in length, grew under the trembling and inexperienced hands of English, French, and Spanish slaves, many of whom had been captains of their own ships. Together with their helpless Moorish counterparts, they were now doomed to long days of labour under the scorching sun, and to dark nights in filthy dungeons, unlit and damp. Some died from mysterious diseases, while others, less fortunate in their fate, rotted in body and mind, without hope of escape or redemption.

The most outrageous accusations brought against Ismail in no way outdid the actual truth. No story, however fantastic, of vile brutality but had its counterpart in fact. This ambassadors and spies from the Western world must have found hard to forgive. For when a monster can outstrip the imagination of his execrators, he is indeed to be held, if not in respect, at least in awe.

And so it was that those who came in scorn or curiosity returned much chastened—if they returned at all. More often they remained to build the mighty walls of this incredible city at which they had scoffed, or to play nursemaid to the Sultan's horses, whose stables were more fit for human habitation than the dwellings of many of the courtiers.

THE city that was emerging from the brain of the Sultan had no master plan and little beauty. Its creator's passion for building seemed as tireless as it was without reason. His vast palace was never completed, for his designs changed with every whim, so that apartments were built and demolished at the crack of a whip, and the great edifice that was to rival the ornate and patterned splendour of Versailles resounded always with the ring of a thousand hammers.

Did the stones to build a wall run out? Ismail would charge his slaves to tear down the beginning of the wall in order to complete the end; or to carry the priceless pillars from the neighbouring ancient Roman city of

Volubilis, whose treasures he plundered without mercy. In his haste, he would often order the buildings to be broken from the top, so that many of the slaves working beneath were crushed under the weight of the falling masonry. But Ismail had no time for such detail, and the walls were erected again over the unburied bodies of the dead.

THIS ruler who had no consideration for human life had, however, an abiding love of horses. Some of his finest steeds had even made the pilgrimage to Mecca. These were sanctified and at death were laid in shrines which themselves became objects of pilgrimage. It is said that any slave condemned to death could gain a free pardon if he but threw himself between the front legs of the Sultan's milk-white steed.

Great stables were built beneath the palace, and each of Ismail's 1200 horses had its own apartment and two slaves to tend it. Through the centre of the royal stables ran a canal of fresh water, where the animals might drink without moving from their quarters. By contrast, the slaves who tended them—many of them nobles in their own countries—were fed with corn that had gathered mildew in their master's subterranean storage vaults, and their thirst was abated with foul and stagnant water that had mingled with the sewers.

It is significant that this Sultan who so inordinately loved his horses should ride in a chariot drawn, not by horses or mules, but by the women of his harem and his eunuchs.

THE women in Ismail's life were many, including at least one English woman abducted by the pirates from her Cornish home. He had over 600 wives and begat 1500 children. But the wives and concubines of his Court, all except his favourite wife, Zidana, who is best remembered for her extreme ugliness and her wisdom in handling her husband, were treated with the same passionate inconsistency as his slaves and courtiers. He would bedeck a slender neck with jewels in the morning, and later in the day sever it from its body because its gentle owner had stolen an orange from the shady groves.

Those who knew the secrets of his private life averred that the great Ismail never took

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the same maid to bed more than once, unless she was with child by him. He would slavishly adhere to the Prophet's law that no man must commit adultery, and therefore, if his fancy turned to a married woman, he would not covet her until she was a widow. But her husband's days were numbered, and soon a young widow would be received into the Sultan's harem.

Ismail's sons were all presented with pearl rings, as tokens of their birth, but his daughters were often strangled at birth—though many survived to spend their lives unnoticed on the outskirts of the Court.

This lean and tawny Emperor, whose visage became black with rage when he was angry, had an overwhelming desire to prove his equality with Western rulers. Perhaps because of his own dark blood, he desired to show supremacy over those who boasted whiter skins. For this reason, he would compel the ambassadors from Europe to kneel before him and to stand in his presence hatless under the noonday sun.

On one occasion, hearing of the charms of Louis XIV's daughter, the Princess of Conti, he sent to her a proposal of marriage, vowing that, if she accepted him, she might even retain her own religion. This clause was a great concession on the part of the Sultan, who, in spite of his brutality, was a fervent missionary for the Moslem cause, and even tried to convert the King of France to the 'only true religion'. The refusal of the Princess to join the Sultan's harem caused much anxiety in the heart of the French ambassador at the Court of Mulai Ismail for many years to come.

**I**SMAIL would kill in a blind fury, and repent of his actions too late. He believed that anyone killed by his hand was transported direct to Paradise, and those of his subjects who had no further love of life would travel half across the land in order to enjoy the privilege of death at the hand of their sovereign lord and spiritual father.

More than once he struck dead a favourite courtier or slave, and then beheaded the distracted physician who could not bring the victim back to life. Such gross 'disobedience' could not go unrewarded!

Towards the end of his life he showed the sharp edge of his brutality to his own son, Mohammed, who had rebelled against him.

Ismail called upon a slave to cut off the young man's right hand and foot, and when the slave refused to lay hands on 'the son of the Sultan' he was put to death. Later, another slave was beheaded for obeying the royal command.

Ismail then ordered that the son's mutilated limbs should be steeped in a cauldron of boiling oil and the half-dead body dragged through the streets. Some days later, at the son's deathbed, he besought Allah with tears to stem the ebbing flood of the life that he had hastened to its end.

Such was Mulai Ismail of Morocco—a hasty, brutal tyrant, whose own soul, it seemed, could not dwell in harmony with his black heart. The people who lived under him in terror grew to believe that their Sultan had discovered the elixir of life. Maybe it was that even Allah was reluctant to gather to himself this most erring of his sons.

However, at last, in his eighty-second year, this powerful and best-remembered of all the Sultans of Morocco, who until his death still took pleasure in his horses and his harem, closed his eyes for the last time on a land that he had loved so jealously, and ruled with such violence.

**P**ERHAPS it was meet that for two months the news of Ismail's death was not disclosed. For who can doubt but that a nation whose foundations had been so deeply shaken by the brutal rule of its Sultan needed a short interlude of peace. And so, for sixty days, the dark walls of Meknes held close the most safely-guarded secret in a city rife with rumour—that their builder, like themselves, had not proved immortal.

But even in death Ismail was dramatic. Two months after he had come to his end, this ancient and decaying ruler made his last long journey in a closed coach to the shrine of Mulai Idris. There, before the astonished crowds, the doors of the coach were flung open, to disclose the secret that the walls of Meknes would not betray. Inside the coach, propped up on cushions, lay Mulai Ismail—dead.

Amid the silent horror of the streets that had lately rung with cheering, the coach of death returned to the city of Meknes and Ismail was laid to rest at last in the mausoleum that he himself had built—for this monarch, whom his subjects had thought to be im-

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mortal, had built for himself palaces for both life and death.

NOW, more than two hundred years have passed over the city of Meknes. The walls are crumbling, the palace languishing in decay, for the glory of Meknes, like the vanity of its builder, has departed, and in its place there stands a sad city, as cities must always be

sad that are built upon the misery of others.

Marrakesh retains its rose-coloured beauty, and Fez its mellow calm of learning, but for Meknes, set upon its lonely hill, standing guard over the fertile plains, there is only a transient loveliness that descends upon its desolation at sunset. Then, it seems as if Allah, bending from the heavens, touches its sorrowing stones with a golden benediction that fades too quickly with the urgent night.

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### For Philip

*Do you remember the brook  
Where the buttercups grew,  
With its clear sandy shallows, beloved of the roach  
And the minnows, that flew  
Our approach  
When we bent down to look—  
Oh, do you remember the brook?*

*Bear you the bridge yet in mind,  
With its solitary plank,  
Where we thought, as we sat over midstream aloft,  
How distant each bank?  
Oh how oft  
My heart thither inclined—  
Ah, bear you the bridge yet in mind?*

*Linger your thoughts in the wood  
Where the hyacinths broke  
Like a misty blue tide that would foam to the knee,  
Till our gratitude woke?  
We could see  
And behold, it was good—  
Still linger your thoughts in the wood?*

*Can you recall the delight  
Of our brotherhood's youth  
Now the undying memory draws from the past a conviction of truth  
That a child's vision, bright,  
Shall outlast  
Every subsequent sight—  
Oh, can you recall the delight?*

*Everything fades but the dreams  
That we knew in the days  
When we walked in Arcadian bliss, unaware  
Of these wearisome ways—  
As we fare,  
More than ever it seems  
That everything fades but the dreams.*

EDGAR PROUDMAN.



# *A Housemaster's Case-Book*

## XI.—Gates v. Marston

EVERETT BARNES

*And the night shall be filled with music,  
And the cares that infest the day  
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,  
And as silently steal away.*

LONGFELLOW.

IT is only by some extension of meaning that the affair of Gates v. Marston can be called a case of mine.\* Neither of these gentlemen, I am happy to say, came under my care as a housemaster; but it did happen that I was involved in their tremendous clash and played a minor part in it. Besides, it is fitting that an episode should be related which shows with what insistence and urgency a schoolmaster's colleagues can impinge upon his life. There is perhaps no community—unless a monastery be one—where such frictions can be set up and such heat generated as in the Common Room of a boy's boarding-school.

In those days—it was the late 'twenties—married schoolmasters were very much less

numerous than they are to-day, though most of the housemasters were married, and a few others, who lived in the town where they could find houses. Some of the bachelors had rooms in the main school buildings (known as 'School') or, if they were House Assistants, with their housemasters; others had lodgings in the town; all of them were encouraged to have at least some of their meals in Common Room, in order to achieve a corporate spirit. What they did in actual fact achieve at times was some very remarkable strains and tensions.

The senior master in School at this period was Gates, the Bursar. Bursarial duties in those days were a mere shadow of what they have since become, and it was fairly common for a member of the staff to combine the bursarship with a light programme of teaching. Gates was a superman to whom such a combination was a mere nothing. He was tall, gaunt, and steel-framed, a machine of furious energy and faultless precision. Inanimate obstacles had a way of lying flat on their faces if they found themselves in his path; and most human obstacles found it convenient to do the same. He was not

\* This story is the last of the series. The whole series, with three additional stories, is now available in book form (W. & R. Chambers, Ltd., 12s. 6d.).

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unpopular, except among the idle and inefficient; in moments of serenity he could be a sunny companion, with a genuine devotion to music, pictures, and mountains. We knew that Gates's exalted standards of efficiency were directed to the public good and that the school would be much less prosperous and much less comfortable to work in if he were not there.

But there was a price to pay for Gates. The steely hinges of his brain were rather easily unseated. When things went wrong for him, and particularly when he encountered negligence or stupidity, he became a man possessed. Gates on the warpath was a figure easily recognised — raking the corridors, thrusting urgently into Houses, flaring gustily in and out of Common Room, buttonholing colleagues with his oft-repeated tale of human delinquency. The steely brain glinting through the steel-rimmed glasses had narrowed its compass to a single thought. Even the shoppers in the High Street, seeing Gates stride by in this mood, were instinctively glad that no shortcomings of their own were involved. In fact, among the great gifts bestowed by Providence on Gates a sense of proportion was not included; and when the balance of his view was disturbed one could rely on him for special pleading, false analogy, and sophistical argument. At such times Gates became a man to be avoided, discussed, or led on, according to the temperament of his various colleagues.

The storm which I am going to describe was undoubtedly the most severe in Gates's time at Melbury. Compared to it, all previous storms had been but as passing squalls. It raged at hurricane-force for about three days; and the man who was responsible was John Marston.

Gates had had trouble with him before and, be it whispered, had not always come out completely unscathed. Marston without doubt was an awkward customer. He was an old lag of a housemaster, into whom it was very difficult to get one's teeth. He was too indolent to put up a proper fight, too elusive to be tied down to his errors, and too clever to be beaten by direct assault. He would stand any amount of offensiveness from Gates without apparently knowing that he had meant to be offensive at all; and at the end there would always be some riposte, quiet and oblique, leaving Gates conscious of a painful and rather ignominious wound, but

not quite certain where he had been hit. In recent years troubles between Gates and Marston had been scarce and they had assumed in their mutual relations a heavily-armoured politeness.

It all started one sultry week at the end of May with a routine request from the Bursar's office for housemasters to send in their revised invitation books so that the invitations for Speech Day could be duly dispatched. Marston, as usual, allowed the last day for sending in the books to pass with no action taken. Gates sent him a reminder, polite but stiff, and Marston put it on the mantelpiece in his study where he would be sure to remember it. To the boy who brought it he remarked amiably: 'I wonder why Mr Gates is always in a hurry for someone to do something.'

The note in due course was buried by other documents on the mantelpiece and Marston thought of the matter no more.

All Marston's *obiter dicta* were subject matter for the mimic, and the bearer of the note reproduced the remark in the sleepy drawl which passed among the boys for the Marston manner. In the course of its circulation it came to the notice of Gates, whose ear was generally not far from the ground.

Then things began to move. The well-known symptoms of Gates's displeasure were in evidence. He buttonholed reluctant colleagues in the passages, enlarging on the maddening inefficiency of Marston, his criminal lack of consideration for others, and, above all, his contemptible disloyalty in making disparaging remarks about another master to a boy. What would happen to the place if everybody . . . etc., etc. Patient hearers made sympathetic noises and retailed the experience to their cronies with relish. There was plenty of amusement to be got out of Gates so long as one was a guiltless and disinterested party.

As the invitation book still did not arrive, Gates proceeded to the next step. At the end of a period he called up a boy in Marston's house, named Bramstock, and gave him a message to the following effect, or thus at least the current version of the story rendered it: 'You might go to your housemaster and ask him if he could summon up enough energy to let me have his invitation book, as



## A HOUSEMASTER'S CASE-BOOK

I've asked him for it three times and it's four days late already.'

Bramstock was not too fond of his housemaster, and besides had his full share of the taste for making mischief between masters which actuates many schoolboys. In this case the mischief already existed, and he did nothing to mitigate it, but delivered the message verbally as it had been given to him. Thereupon Marston reached for his umbrella and beat him: he was noted for the wide variety of the implements he used for beating—golf-clubs, hockey-sticks, broom-handles, and, on one occasion, a broken barometer. He explained wearily to Bramstock that he must either be a tactless oaf for delivering an improper message, or alternatively a liar who had misquoted Mr Gates. In either case a beating was called for. It was rather a symbolic than a serious beating, but certainly corporal chastisement in a technical sense. The boy then apologised—and the invitation book was not sent.

Risborough, my House Assistant, supplied me with the next phase of the story. After Chapel that evening he heard Gates accost the messenger: 'Did you deliver my message to your housemaster, Bramstock?'

'Yes, sir.'

'What did he say?'

'He just beat me, sir.'

'Beat you?'

'Yes, sir.'

'What did he do that for?'

'For being either a tactless oaf or a liar, he said, sir. I delivered the message exactly, too, sir.'

I HAD dropped in for a drink with Marston after Chapel, as I very often did. He was a widower, a brilliant scholar and a musician, and, though some fifteen years older than me, one of my best friends. He loved playing Chopin almost as much as I loved listening to him. On this occasion he was at the piano, with the usual cigarette trailing from his mouth and a glass of sherry close at hand, when Gates arrived, looking like the pause before a tornado. Marston did not stop playing, but said with every sign of extreme exhaustion: 'Oh, Gates, I wanted to see you.'

Gates must have noticed me, but he gave no indication that he had done so. I did not happen to be connected with the only idea

occupying his mind at that moment. As a matter of fact, our relations were very amicable, except for occasional interludes of strain. He spluttered: 'Did you? I wanted to see you.'

Although the effort apparently cost him his last ounce of energy, Marston proceeded to keep the initiative. Still playing quietly, he said: 'About that oafish boy Bramstock. I had to beat him.'

'That's what I've come to see you about,' said Gates.

'Oh dear. Hasn't he been to apologise yet?'

'I don't know what you're talking about,' Gates replied. Marston's continued playing was, I thought, putting him considerably out of his stride—as was doubtless intended by that downy old bird.

'Bramstock brought me an extraordinary message saying it came from you,' Marston explained. 'Of course, I couldn't tell whether he'd made the whole thing up, or merely worded it very crudely. In any case it seemed best to beat him. I'll get him to come and apologise now.' He raised himself with a supreme effort from the piano-stool and toiled towards the door, his shoelaces flapping as he went.

'Don't want the boy to apologise. What's he got to apologise for?' Gates's words came out with the effect of an aged car starting up on a cold morning.

'It's nice of you to say so, Gates, but the boy had much better apologise. They mustn't do that sort of thing. I'll send for him. Come on, Everett—we'll go into the drawing-room.' Whereupon Marston departed humming, and I rose to go with him.

Gates, completely nonplussed, but quite determined that the projected interview with Bramstock should not take place, followed John to the door and called after him almost appealingly: 'I don't want the boy to apologise, really. Better leave it as it is. I only wanted to know if you'd got your invitation book ready.'

John returned. 'Didn't I send it to you? Surely I must have.'

'I've only asked for it three times,' said Gates.

'Oh dear. I am sorry. Getting that message must have put it clean out of my head. I'll give it to you now.' And he fetched the book from his desk.

Gates asked whether it had been brought up to date.

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'Do I have to do that?' asked Marston, who had done it, belatedly, for the last sixteen years.

'Don't know who else would have all the particulars.'

'Oh, I'll do it, certainly,' said Marston, giving the impression that it might well cost him his health, if not his life. 'When would you like it?'

'I wanted it last Wednesday,' said Gates. I had the feeling that his suppressed emotion might burst out like an excessive head of steam at any moment.

'I'll do it at once without fail and let you have it. Or shall I send it over to the Bursary?'

'You'd better send it to me.'

'Won't you have a drink?' asked John, as Gates moved to the door.

'No, thank you,' said Gates, and went out breathing heavily.

Marston followed him to the door and said, 'I am sorry. I hope I haven't been a nuisance.' Then he returned, smiled wearily at me, and with a murmured 'Poor Gates' resumed his seat at the piano and his Chopin.

FROM what I know of Gates, that might well have been the end of the storm, in which case it would hardly have merited the name. If the invitation book had been sent at once, Marston would certainly have escaped from a false strategic position by a shrewd tactical blow. But the book was not delivered that night, and at Congress (the short master's meeting held every morning after breakfast) it had not yet arrived. Marston, as often happened—he found the time inconveniently early—was not present, and the war was still on. The fact that the beating of Bramstock had now become public knowledge further inspired Gates, on the principle that attack is the best defence. He was soon in full spate again. At such periods he was like some engine deriving fuel from its own exhaust. Buttonholed colleagues were swept into the Gates camp by irrefragable arguments. The case as expounded by him admitted no demur. His statements, as always on these occasions, were so blandly *ex parte*, facts were so naively distorted and remarks so ingeniously misquoted, that the criminality of his antagonist and the sweet reasonableness of Gates were both beyond dispute. It was apparent that Marston had a vicious streak which made him unfit for the

care of boys. Furthermore, his dilatoriness, which was obviously malicious and deliberate, combined with his inability to speak the truth, rendered him an impossible colleague. Things had gone far enough. There was now nothing to be done except to report Marston to the Head. Didn't his buttonholed victim agree? The buttonholed victim most certainly did not think it wise to disagree.

However, before he proceeded to this step, fortune presented him with a new weapon. Marston's House ran out of coke, and as this commodity was issued by the school—being an untaxable portion of the housemaster's emoluments—a requisition had to be sent to the Bursar's office. Naturally, as it came from John Marston, the requisition was not sent till every scrap of coke had been exhausted and was accordingly marked 'urgent'. Gates, after some reflections on people who had not the wit to ask for a further supply of fuel before they were completely denuded, gave his clerk instructions that no coke whatever was to be sent to Mr Marston. 'No invitation book, no coke.'

Marston, informed that the furnace was out and that there could be no more hot water till coke was delivered, telephoned with exemplary speed to the Bursary. No reply; the office was closed for the night. Nothing for it but to apply to Gates himself. The thought of Gates brought into his mind the invitation book still sitting on his desk. He hurriedly, and doubtless inaccurately, brought it up to date and sent it over to be left in the Bursary letter-box. Then, with a clear conscience, he dispatched a note to Gates, asking for immediate attention to his fuel situation, and requesting an answer by the bearer. Gates, still waiting for the book, which should have come to him personally, told the bearer there was no answer.

John Marston, stirred to vigorous action by the thought of missing his hot bath in the morning, rang up the Bursar's clerk at his home. Had he received a requisition for an immediate supply of coke? Yes, he had, but he had also received instructions from the Bursar that none was to be sent.

I happened to drop in on John as I was going over to Chapel that evening. Seldors have I seen him so moved. He padded up and down in his bedroom-slippers, with the ash dropping from the cigarette attached to his lip. 'Really, this fellow Gates is too much of a good thing. When it comes to the Lord

## A HOUSEMASTER'S CASE-BOOK

High Panjandrum cutting off supplies because people are too busy to attend to all his little red-tape requirements . . . I don't mind for myself in the least, but what about the boys? Are they to have no baths in the morning just because our Mr Gates is in one of his tantrums?'

'But surely, John,' I interrupted, 'your boys don't have hot baths in the morning. It's the summer term, you know.'

'Not in the morning actually. But they have them at night.'

'Only a few, presumably,' I said.

'Oh, no. Quite a lot—the majority. I insist on it.'

Strange how men in certain moods will keep up a hollow pretence even with an intimate friend. I was well aware, as John must have known, that such routine matters as how many boys, if any, in his House had hot baths at night had long ceased to interest him. What are Matrons for? John had reached that stage in his schoolmastering career when a sense of the relative importance of different things had begun to reassert itself.

However, at the moment John was prepared to fight for the hot baths of his House, and himself, with all the unbalanced pertinacity of Gates himself. He continued to pad up and down, wagging his head and dropping ash on his waistcoat. Then he took a decision involving action—a rare event at this stage of his career. 'We can't have this fellow Gates riding the high horse like this. Life is becoming intolerable. I shall go and see the Head before Chapel.' So, with a weary determination, Marston put on his shoes and pedalled off on his bicycle, with the laces flapping in the breeze.

I had a word with him in the Cloister after Chapel. 'Did you settle that all right?'

'Oh, yes. Of course the Head entirely agreed. He's sending a note to the Panjandrum.'

Then I knew that we were in for no ordinary explosion.

AT Congress next morning there was an electric feeling in the air. Gates had not been silent and most people knew the latest developments. There was a hush in the room as Marston dragged himself laboriously over to Gates and said with a weary smile: 'I'm so glad you can let me have some coke, Gates. I'm afraid I'm a nuisance—always wanting

something.' And he waggled benignly away.

Gates, looking like Harveyised steel throughout, gulped, but no words came. When the Head had gone out, he fastened on a senior colleague at the door and went out with him, spluttering fiercely.

With his departure there was a release of tension and a burst of conversation. I learnt that Gates, on receiving the Head's note the night before, had immediately sat down and written a six-page letter of resignation to the Chairman of the Governing Body. Strictly speaking, it was not a resignation but an ultimatum, stating that either Marston must resign or he himself would. He had told five other masters about this letter in strict confidence, and when each of them had found that he was not the sole confidant, the circle of knowledge had rapidly widened. Gates was not the man to nourish a secret flame. One housemaster who had been shown the letter and asked to say if it was too strong, said that he couldn't imagine anything stronger—but if Gates felt like that he had better work it out of his system. It was, he knew, not the first time Gates had resigned from the staff at Melbury, though it looked as if it might well be the last.

Then followed two days of uneasy quiet, during which everyone who thought he had the slightest influence with Gates, including myself, tried vainly to persuade him to withdraw the letter. His departure in these circumstances would really be a major disaster for Melbury. In spite of his lack of balance and his intolerance he had a clear sight, a power of organisation, and a financial sense which had already been of high value to the school; and his work was hardly yet begun. John Marston was only a few years from his retirement, and, fond though I was of him, I had no illusions about the relative value to the school of the two men; in this matter, moreover, John was clearly in the wrong. The Head had completely queered his pitch with Gates by taking Marston's side without inquiring into the antecedents of the dispute, and he was now quite powerless in the matter. After considering the *impasse* fully, I began to think I had a mission. There was only one person who might turn Gates from his decision and that was John Marston himself. He, who could be so maddeningly difficult, could also, when he liked, be utterly disarming. I was better placed than anyone else for bringing the two together; and I knew I could count on a

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very potent agency on the side of reconciliation.

In due course Gates received his reply from the Chairman of the Governors, begging him to withdraw the resignation. Anyone could have told him that his plea would be ineffective. The Chairman, being unable to come down to Melbury himself, as the importance of the matter demanded, got the masters' representative on the Governing Body to do so. He was an Oxford don named Carruthers, well known to me for many years. I made my plan for the evening he was due to arrive, and secured the Head's acquiescence.

Those were the comparatively early days of wireless, when music-lovers used to regard the broadcasting of a good concert as an important event. I asked Gates to dinner, selecting the day so that we might listen to the London Philharmonic afterwards. Gates swallowed the bait and accepted.

I next called on John Marston. 'Look here, John,' I said, 'you've got to come round to my house this evening after dinner. There's a London Philharmonic concert on the wireless.' Marston himself had no set.

'Impossible, my dear Everett,' he said. 'You know I practically never go out at night. What is going to happen to my house while I am away?'

'That's what House Assistants are for. It is essential that you should come round. I have an important guest whom I want you to meet.'

'I can't think of anyone important enough to get me out at that time of night. Who is it?'

'Your old friend Gates.'

John looked at me quizzically for a moment. Then he said: 'Have you told the gentleman he is to meet me?'

'No. You are to drop in unexpectedly. When you are both mellowed by music I shall be called away on urgent business, leaving you two alone. You will then apologise to Gates for being so beastly to him.'

John gave a snorting laugh. 'Mr Gates will have swallowed me alive before I have a chance to do any such thing.'

'You must bring all your invincible charm to bear on him. You must also explain to him that you are a worm and no man. In fact,

you must assure him that you will resign yourself rather than let him go.'

'That's exactly what he wants to happen.'

'He won't by the time you've done with him.'

I eventually succeeded in persuading him.

Everything shaped itself as intended. While Gates, Elinor, and I were listening to the concert, Marston dropped in. I could feel Gates bristling, but I made John sit down in silence so that the music should not be interrupted. By the time it was over, Gates had recovered from the first shock and had got used to John's presence. We talked for a little about the concert, and then I made an excuse for taking Elinor away.

When I got outside I rang up the Head and asked if Carruthers could come over. Ten minutes later he was there. I took him into the study and briefed him. From the drawing-room we could hear the sound of Marston playing the piano intermittently, with lively bouts of conversation between. I told Carruthers he was to go in, and that before he left he must have secured a withdrawal of Gates's resignation. Then I pushed him into the drawing-room.

When I had finished my business in the House—in a leisurely manner—I went back. The three men were talking easily—about cricket now, not music. We had a drink and the party broke up. Gates suggested that he should walk back to the Head's house with Carruthers. I kept John Marston behind for a moment. 'Well,' I said, 'how did the apology go?'

'My dear Everett, I had no chance to make an apology,' John replied. 'We just talked music, till Carruthers came in and interrupted us. And Gates is coming round to me to-morrow night to finish the discussion. If only he would stick to music, which he understands, instead of . . . Oh, I mustn't say that. Really, you know, Mr Gates is a very great man.' The old villain was back at the piano and intoned gently to a background of Chopin:

*'He doth bstride our narrow world  
Like a Colossus; and we petty men  
Walk under his huge legs and peep about  
To find ourselves—kept in our proper place.'*

# From Bane to Boon

## *The Extraction of Firedamp from Coal-Mines for Town Gas*

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TREVOR HOLLOWAY

METHANE, marsh-gas, or firedamp, you can name it as you please, for the words all refer to the selfsame gas that every miner dreads. Some mines are little troubled by it; at others it is a constant menace.

As long as there have been pits at Whitehaven, firedamp has given trouble and occasioned many tragic disasters. Few readers will have forgotten the disaster at the William Pit in 1947. As far back as 1733 Sir James Lowther presented a paper to the Royal Society describing the emission of firedamp encountered in the course of sinking a pit in Cumberland, and it was in an attempt to combat the dangers of this gas that Charles Spedding invented the steel mill for giving light below ground.

At about the same time, methane from a Whitehaven pit was piped to the surface and a local doctor and amateur scientist named Brownrigg used it to heat furnaces in his laboratory. It was suggested to the town authorities that the gas could be used for lighting the streets, but the idea was not followed up. Following an explosion at the Haswell Colliery, Durham, in 1844, Michael Faraday and Sir Charles Lyell outlined a scheme for piping the methane away, but their proposal was rejected as impracticable.

The dreams of these early pioneers are now becoming accomplished facts. Not only is methane being successfully drained from the Haigh Colliery at Whitehaven, but the gas is also being converted for domestic use, and actually constitutes about 80 per cent of Whitehaven's gas-supply! In other words, the gas the miner once dreaded now cooks his Sunday dinner! More important is the fact that the pit in which he works is now a safer

pit. Furthermore, drainage experiments are under way at many other collieries throughout the country and there are installations for using the gas at five collieries, including the Haigh.

THE story behind this heartening news is surely one of the brightest chapters in mining history. To begin with, what is methane, or firedamp? Its third name, marsh-gas, gives us a pointer to its origin. During the decomposition of masses of vegetable material in the early stages of the formation of coal considerable amounts of the gas produced managed to escape to the surface, but much was trapped by the laying down of successive layers of material. This trapped gas eventually permeates the solid strata and is released rapidly only when these are fractured—as when they are disturbed by mining operations.

A concentration of methane can be dangerous, and the method of dealing with this problem has been to increase ventilation, so as to make the concentration as low as possible. Methane at the Haigh Colliery used to be removed by way of the airways at a concentration of about 1 per cent. Modern methods have now made it possible to increase safety by keeping as much as possible of the methane entirely out of the ventilation system, the gas being removed in concentrated form by pipeline.

The decision to explore the possibilities of methane drainage at Haigh Colliery was taken in 1948, and the next two years were devoted to carrying out an extensive survey to find out where the gas was coming from and the best



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way to tackle the problem. Ventilation experts and scientists were despatched to the Continent to study techniques there.

That the problem was no small one may be appreciated from the fact that for every ton of coal produced at this Whitehaven pit it was necessary to circulate ten tons of air in order to dilute the methane present in the workings down to 1 per cent. The effect of modern methane drainage has been to reduce by about half the percentage of firedamp in the working districts.

At the Haigh pit it has been found that the greatest emission is obtained at a point about 100 yards back from the face in a zone where there is a separation of the roof strata, thus providing a ready path for the gas. Long boreholes are put up into the roof strata at such points to collect the gas, which is then led off into a collecting-main.

A small pilot tried out in 1951 gave valuable information for use in developing the present programme, which came into operation during the summer of 1952. The new plant proved that it could extract about 500 cubic feet of pure methane per minute. The life and yield of boreholes vary considerably. One has in two-and-a-half years yielded over 100 million cubic feet of gas, equivalent in heating value to over 4000 tons of coal.

The main purpose of methane drainage is to increase safety, and uppermost in the minds of those planning the scheme was the possibility that a fall of roof might cause a fracture in the main, the consequences of which might be grave indeed. To ensure a generous margin of safety, the system is so arranged that, in the event of the percentage of methane in the pipeline falling below 50 per cent, the exhaustor plant automatically closes down, ringing warning-bells at various points. At three points in the plant, miniature 'traffic-lights' indicate the quality of the gas—green for over 70 per cent, orange if between 50 and 70 per cent, and red if below 50 per cent. Both the orange and red lights also actuate other and audible warnings. There are also various instruments which indicate immediately any departure from normal in the quality or quantity of methane extracted.

**I**N the early stages, the main consideration was how to get the methane efficiently and safely out of the pit. Having achieved this, more attention was devoted to putting to

useful work the valuable gas which was being released into the atmosphere. Increasing use was made of the gas for heating the boilers at the pit, and it was estimated that something like 10,000 tons of coal was saved thereby in little over a year.

Valuable as this may have been from the Coal Board's point of view, it was felt that the national interest should, and could, be better served by the gas, for colliery boilers can function quite efficiently on the very low-grade coal for which they were originally designed. Thus, from an early stage, close collaboration has been maintained between the Coal and Gas Boards in order to determine how methane collected from colliery workings could be most profitably employed.

Several alternative uses have been, and are being, examined, and it was decided to study one of these by making a practical on-the-spot test at Whitehaven of the use of the gas for the town's supply. It so happened that conditions were very suitable for the test, as the Gas Board had already arranged to cease manufacture at its Whitehaven gas-works, which were ill-equipped and in a state of disrepair when taken over by the Board. The idle plant was thus available to handle the methane extracted from the Haigh Colliery. Accordingly, a half-mile main was laid from the colliery to the old gas-works, and the delivery of methane commenced.

Methane has approximately twice the heating value of the normal town's gas-supply, but its flame speed is slow. It could be used in an untreated state, but this would entail changing the design of every type of domestic burner. It was essential, therefore, to modify the gas so that it could be used alone or mixed in any proportions with gas from normal sources, without any change taking place in the behaviour of the flame or in the performance of domestic cookers and other appliances.

The method employed to modify the methane extracted from the Haigh Colliery is one known as catalytic re-forming. At Whitehaven gas-works, one of the old gas-retorts has been converted into a catalytic chamber. Half the methane supplied—about 1000 cubic feet an hour—is put into the gas-holder. The other half, mixed with steam, is passed through the chamber, over catalytic cobbles made of fireclay and impregnated with nickel oxide. This converts the methane into a mixture of hydrogen and carbon monoxide

## COLOUR-BLINDNESS IN MAN AND NATURE

—both normal constituents of town gas. Blended with pure methane and coke-works gas, it is identical in behaviour and in heating value with the normal supply.

Encouraged by the success of the Whitehaven experiment, the Wales Gas Board has entered into a contract with the National Coal Board's Point of Ayr Colliery to take 4½ million cubic feet of methane gas per week for the purpose of a joint experiment in the

utilisation of such gas from coal-mines. The fact that the contract is one of twenty years' duration is a clear indication that gas and coal authorities are determined that methane shall become an asset instead of remaining a menace.

As one Whitehaven Colliery executive observed: 'Before methane drainage, the gas was always in the airways—and on our minds. Now it's safe inside a pipe.'

# Colour-Blindness in Man and Nature

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DAVID GUNSTON

COLOUR-BLINDNESS—that's a pretty drastic description of a not uncommon affliction of otherwise normal-sighted people. Very few human beings are quite oblivious to all colours, seeing only a world of black-and-white, like a movie or a newspaper photograph, but abnormality in colour-vision is well enough known among all kinds of persons, and often lies undetected and unsuspected. Medical examinations, such as those for the Forces or certain occupations, frequently discover colour-blindness among men and women who never realised their limitations in this direction. Many more folk must also be colour-blind to some degree, and never know it.

Why is this so? Such a striking and ever-present thing as colour in the world seems to most of us to be something we should miss at once if we were ever deprived of it; yet, since colour-blindness is nearly always only partial and is congenital and quite incurable, those so affected may easily live in ignorance of their defect. After all, colour is really an arbitrary thing, intangible and quite beyond all normal means of description. If you doubt this, just try explaining the difference between

yellow and blue to a blind man, *without* the use of comparison. Colours can, of course, never be properly described. Most of us know what they look like, yet we are incapable of telling others about them. Therefore the people who are partially colour-blind have never known the reds or the greens or the blues they cannot see, and so usually remain blissfully unaware of their colour-blindness until such time as some concrete test discloses the fact.

BEFORE discussing the extent and peculiarities of colour-blindness, it is necessary to know something about colour. No object actually contains the colour by which we know it. Light, which is due to waves, is made up of a combination of colours, each colour having a wavelength of different frequency. When light falls on to any object, most colours of the spectrum are absorbed by the surface of the object: only one colour, or one combination of colours, is reflected, and this is the colour we see. Thus a blue flower absorbs all the light wavelengths in white light except blue, which it reflects back to our eyes,

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and so appears blue. White things reflect all the light, and dead-black things absorb all of it. It is therefore scientifically correct to say that colour, like alleged beauty, exists only in the eye and mind of the beholder.

Most human beings can tell apart about one hundred and sixty colour shades in ordinary daylight, all of which are made up of varying combinations of the three important colours, red, green, and blue. According to the Young-Helmholtz theory, a normal human eye has three lots of sensitive cells or receptors which recognise these three 'primary' colours, and, of course, all their combinations. Colour-blind people have either only two of the three lots of cells, which usually means they cannot see either reds or greens, or else a marked weakness in one or other of these groups of cells. Since defective colour-vision has such a cause, there is nothing that can be done about it. Colour-blind people cannot become painters or textile designers or interior decorators, nor can they take up certain other jobs, but otherwise they suffer only a limited disadvantage. How many a woman whose husband can never seem to match a piece of material, or confuses the colours of clothes or wallpaper, has unwittingly discovered a degree of colour-blindness in the unsuspecting male?

Men are much more often colour-blind than women. Tests show that roughly 4 per cent of men and only .4 per cent of women are colour-blind. Yet, since the affliction is born in people, it is also hereditary, and, although a woman may have normal colour-vision, her children may be partly colour-blind if her husband is. If, as occasionally happens, it is the woman who is affected, then her children will almost certainly also fail to recognise some colours.

Few colour-blind folk, however, need despair. Colour is such a strange thing that, apart from the loss of much beauty of a visual kind in the world—blue skies, or red sunsets, or green trees—colour-blindness, provided it does not affect one's means of livelihood, is not such a terrible calamity, for it is usually only partial. Colours are themselves capable of having differing interpretations put upon them: what to me is green, to you is blue, or rather what we regard as green or blue, and, furthermore, there are even fashions in colour interpretation. Impossible, you say. But throughout their literature the ancient Greeks referred to the normal human face as green;

and there is no reason to suppose that human complexions have altered as radically as all that! And Homer called the sea wine-red. It just shows how intangible and changeable colour ideas may be. Colour-vision is developing and changing all the time over the ages.

**M**OST colour-blindness is in the red-green range. Quite simple tests with coloured lights and cards reveal two variants of this: the matching of a bluish-red with a dark green and, more frequently, the matching of pink with pale green. Reds and greens appear muddy browns with only slight differences of shade. Very often partially colour-blind people will match all colours they are shown with other colours made up of only two of the three primary colours, which shows that they cannot recognise one of the primaries, usually red or green. People who cannot see blue are rarer, but this form of colour-blindness is much harder to detect, and may often pass unnoticed.

The most ingenious way of testing for colour-blindness is for the person to be shown white cards on which numerals are picked out in red dots on a green background—or vice versa—so that to normal eyes the figure is easily spotted, but to the colour-blind it is not noticed, or else seen only in part, like a 3 which is really an 8, the missing part being made up of dots of a colour not detectable by the faulty eyes.

Many clever people are colour-blind, but rarely do they appear in professions or spheres where a perception of colour is essential. Bernard Shaw was partially colour-blind, and knew it.

The first person to draw attention to the disadvantages of colour-blindness in a scientific manner was John Dalton, the great 18th-century Quaker chemist, although the condition had been known for centuries before his time. He said that to him blood was bottle-green, and a laurel leaf was the same colour as sealing-wax. Quakers in his day objected to flamboyant colours, yet when he received the degree of Doctor of Civil Law at Oxford he wore the bright-scarlet gown in the streets for several days, unaware of its conspicuous colour and of the stir it produced among his fellow-Quakers. Indeed, the term Daltonism is now used to denote red-green blindness.

## COLOUR-BLINDNESS IN MAN AND NATURE

**W**HILST complete colour-vision is to be desired, it is worth remembering that human beings score over many other inhabitants of the earth in this respect. Testing the colour-perceptions of animals, birds, fish, and insects is at best a tricky task, but we do know quite a bit about the subject now, thanks to the tireless efforts of many investigators in several countries, notably Britain, Germany, and the U.S.A.

The most striking conclusion that emerges is that, with the exception of the monkeys and apes, no mammals see clear colours at all. Dogs, cats, horses, lions, elephants—none of them can register colours, only different shades of black, white and, grey. Even the proverbial bull who gets mad at red clothes or fluttering red rags sees none of the red in them. I hate to think how many million nervous people wearing red have studiously avoided interviews with bulls, all for nothing. If he feels like it, a bull will charge no matter what colours are dangled before him. Nor, too, do dogs tell things by their colours, not even their mistress's coat or gloves, or a favourite ball. Yet the to us drab world of greys and black cannot be too bad, since it is no worse than that we see in most films and press illustrations. The higher animals, the apes and monkeys, can tell most colours apart quite well. A rough-and-ready guide to the degree of colour-vision in nature is whether the creatures themselves are brightly-coloured. Few mammals have really bright colours, for if they did these colours would not in any

case be seen by their own kind; the most gaudy mammals are the mandrills, with their pink and blue skin-patches, which have a sexual significance.

With birds, most of which are brightly-coloured, colour-perception is particularly vivid. The appreciation of the bright colours of the cock bird plays a big part in avian courtship. Only blues and violets are less vividly seen by birds, and it is a striking fact that very few birds are wholly blue or violet in plumage colour, and then most brightly. Lizards and snakes see most colours, and fish have good, if limited, appreciation of yellows, reds, and blues, while bees and other honey-seeking insects know blues and purples best. Flies know blue, too, and usually avoid it. Mosquitoes know yellows, blues, and black, yet somehow seem to detest yellow, and also white, which are therefore the best colours for clothes in hot lands. Only frogs and one or two similar lower creatures appear to be completely colour-blind, but, since they hunt solely by keenness of ordinary eyesight, whereas most mammals hunt by scent, they are not really adversely affected by their limitation.

Only in the civilised human world, where signalling by red and green is now almost universal, do the colour-blind really meet with trouble, and possibly constitute a source of real danger. No one who drives a car or a train, or pilots an aircraft or ship, can be relied upon if he or she is colour-blind in the red-green group.

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### Swallows

*Swallows never brave the snow,  
Never see the pretty show,  
Never crave our pity so—  
Ere it comes, away they go.*

*Wintry winds, when summer's vain,  
Wintry winds, and drifting rain  
Running down my window-pane—  
These they know, yet come again.*

*Flying from the burning day,  
Flying to a cooler May,  
Mating where the skies are grey,  
Nesting but to fly away.*

JAMES MACALPINE.



## *A Place in the Sun*

CHARLES C. TALLACK

**I**T was at Bhowra, in Bihar, India, midway across the Damodar river, that I was nearly roasted alive. I was managing a group of mines which straggled on either side of this great watercourse—great as a river only in the monsoon and a wide valley of burning sand in the dry season, with perhaps a trickle of water in the middle. Sometimes this tiny trickle dried up, too, but the village women were able to fill their water chatties by digging into the sand, for there was always water down there throughout the rainless months. The homes of some were so far away that the women must start out at daybreak in the hot weather, when the village tanks were dry, so as to take water from this sure source and be home again before nightfall.

At Bhowra we had plenty of water, which was pumped from the mines and piped to the houses of our workers. Even so, many preferred to take it from the Damodar, for all rivers are revered in India and their waters share something of the holiness of that of the Ganges.

**T**O get to some of our shafts I had to cross the Damodar, and, although in the hot weather water did not hinder me, the discomfort of walking back through the hot, dry

sand did, so I frequently returned in a bucket on the aerial ropeway which spanned the river and was used for bringing sand from one side to the other, where it was flushed into the mines to replace the coal removed and prevent the workings from collapsing. The whole of our thick seams could then be taken out in safety. The main span which crossed the Damodar was well over a quarter of a mile long, and in the centre of that span the bucket hung more than fifty feet above the river-bed, but only cleared the water by fourteen feet when the monsoon floods surged down.

The mild-steel buckets were neither spacious nor comfortable, and they got very hot in the blazing sun, but it was possible, by dint of crouching on one's haunches, to arrange that only one's boots touched the hot metal. The journey took just about three minutes and the breeze caused by the motion of the bucket through the air made the passage tolerable if not exactly a joy-ride. In the hot season the ropeway was stopped at midday and the engineman went home for his lunch. He did not return until three o'clock, for metal exposed to the sun was too hot to handle during those hours and the coolies rested from their task of loading the burning sand into the iron trucks which fed the hopper from which the ropeway buckets were filled.



## A PLACE IN THE SUN

When I visited the mines across the river in the dry months I would set out soon after sunrise and walk through the river-bed, for then the sand was cool and the walk quite pleasant. I used to try to get my work finished so that I could return on the ropeway before it was stopped at noon, and on setting out in the morning I usually warned the engineman to stay and keep the engine going until I came back, in case I were a few minutes late.

On this particular day, at the height of the hot season, I had not told him that I was going across, and when I came to return it was very nearly twelve o'clock. Thinking that he probably knew that I was on the other side and that, in any case, I had time to get across before he stopped the rope, I jumped into a bucket and glided out over the broad valley of sand. Directly above the trickle of water that remained in the river-bed my bucket jerked to a stop. The engineman had gone.

**H**ITHERTO I had given no consideration to the seriousness of such a mishap and had only vaguely thought of it as a possible inconvenience. I was soon to find that it was much more than that. With the stopping of the bucket, the heat immediately made itself felt—heat that was almost unbearable. I thought with dismay of the three hours I might have to spend crouched in this acutely uncomfortable position, surrounded by hot iron and grilled in the rays of the sun at its zenith.

There was not a breath of air since the bucket had stopped. Unthinkingly I grasped the sides of my prison and, recoiling from the searing contact, knocked my topee off on the hanger of the bucket, thus losing even that protection. I began to panic. I must do something—but what? It was no use shouting. There was no one to hear me. 'I shall never stand three hours of this,' I thought. I kept forgetting myself, and leaning against the sides of the bucket. I scorched my hands, my hips, my back, my elbows, and became so agitated that I repeated these contacts with the cruel iron more and more frequently.

'Cruel iron, mild steel, cold steel.' My thoughts were becoming inconsequent. I was roasting, I was toasting. I laughed and I cursed. The sun beat upon my head. Absurdities coursed through my brain. 'Irony of a cold mild-steel prison,' I babbled. 'Like a babbling brook,' I thought fatuously, which

reminded me of the water in the streamlet below. I nearly jumped out, but bethought myself in time that my position would almost certainly be worse if I dropped the fifty-odd feet from the bucket and lay injured in the hot sand. All the same, the glistening trickle in the river bed was very tempting.

I glanced at my wrist-watch. Only half-an-hour had passed since the rope stopped. My heart sank at the seemingly interminable time before I could expect relief. It required greater and greater mental effort to stay where I was and not jump from the bucket. My brain was giddy by the heat, and as my thoughts became more and more irrational the fear that they might lead me to that folly added to my disquiet. The will-power that I needed was fast ebbing.

I thought of fire-walkers, fire-eaters, salamanders, devils and imps. An imp with a red-hot face and a green cap actually came and sat on the edge of the bucket and grinned at me. He joined me in appreciation of the irony of calling my prison-walls mild steel. 'Cold steel, cold mild steel, mild irony of cold steel.' I strung the words together as they came into my head and I remember how funny we found them, and how we laughed. Then my brain worked normally for a while and the fear that I was going mad sent a chill down my spine.

I was just going to start chuckling about the oddity of a cold chill in a chilled steel bucket, when, heaven be praised, I saw a woman coming across the sand bearing on her head a pitcher for water. The ray of hope to stop me from jumping from the bucket had come.

**I** WATCHED the woman as she slowly, oh, so very, very slowly, came nearer, until at last she was within hailing distance. My shout startled her to a jump, so that the pitcher fell from her head and broke on the sand. I feared she would run away in fright before I could explain, since she was obviously unaware whence the voice came, and doubtless would think it was from the spirit world, unless I could reassure her.

Fortunately I recognised her as the wife of one of our fitters, and when I spoke her name and told her where I was her fears were calmed and I was able to tell her of my plight. She hurried off immediately to call the engineman. The twenty minutes before the rope started seemed an eternity, but I clung on to sanity until at last I found myself being helped

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out of the bucket on the home side of the river. I asked for water and gulped down pints of it before I collapsed in delirium.

They carried me to my bungalow, and as I lay in bed the imp, looking very dapper, leapt

on to the bedrail, raised his green cap with cool courtesy and departed.

After three days my fever subsided, and within a week I was back to normal—but I never travelled on the ropeway again.

## P.D.S.A.

### *The Work of the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals*

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#### ROSE TENENT

AT a dockside animal shelter an elderly lady patiently awaited the result of an examination of her dog. She lived by herself and the mongrel was her sole companion. Now, to her horror, it seemed that her dear old friend was going blind. As she waited, she imagined her pet having to be destroyed and herself left all alone. Then the dispensary door opened. Imagine her joy at being reassured that, except for a slight dimming of the sight due to age, her dog's eyes were perfectly sound.

Throughout Great Britain stretches a network of dispensaries, mobile caravans, ambulances, and hospitals devoted to healing the sick and injured animals of owners who are unable to afford fees. This dog was just one of the million cases which received free treatment from the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals over the past year.

The P.D.S.A. was founded by the late Mrs Maria Elizabeth Dickin, C.B.E., in 1917, since when it has never refused help to any creature, whatever the emergency.

WHILE engaged in welfare work among the poor people of London, Mrs Dickin was horrified at the pitiable condition of the animals. In the streets were many dogs and

cats walking on three legs, and dragging along a broken or injured limb; others were nearly blind with mange or covered with sores; all were looking dejected and miserable, and searching for food in the gutter. In the homes, which were little more than hovels, all kinds of animals were huddled up in corners, suffering from terrible complaints.

The problem haunted Mrs Dickin. Something had to be done to ease the misery of these poor creatures. The solution was a dispensary where sick animals could be treated free of charge.

First, however, it was necessary to find suitable premises. Day after day Mrs Dickin tramped many miles looking for a place, no matter how small. Often she was told of somewhere that seemed suitable, only to find that it had been taken, or had existed only in the imagination of the person who had directed her. Eventually, in the poorest quarter of London's East End, she was given permission to use a dark and dingy old cellar.

With the help of a well-known animal practitioner she then set to work. A notice-board was put up: 'Bring Your Sick Animals—Do Not Let Them Suffer—All Animals Treated—All Treatment Free.'

The first evening, four patients were brought along. There was a poor cat suffering

terribly from mange, a dog with cankered ears, and another that had jumped out of a window and broken its leg. Then came an old coster leading a limping donkey. Several times he had stopped and read the notice, shaken his head, and gone on. But something had drawn him back to the spot again, and finally he decided to take the animal in. 'Would you be the animal doctor, lady?' he inquired of Mrs Dickin.

Mrs Dickin explained that she did not treat the animals herself, but had someone competent who would be glad to help. The old man was still dubious, but said that if they could do something for his donkey he would be very grateful. The animal was treated, and for the next three days it was brought along at the same time, after which it was all right. The old man was so delighted that he never tired of telling people what the P.D.S.A. had done for him, and before long sick animals were brought in such numbers that their owners had to form a queue outside the dispensary door.

Soon it was obvious that larger premises were needed. These were found in the shape of a shop with four rooms in Whitechapel. Here the P.D.S.A. was soon treating an average of 100 cases a day, many people bringing their pets from very long distances. The dreadful nature of some of the cases made Mrs Dickin realise more than ever the tremendous amount of work waiting to be done, and by the early part of 1922 seven dispensaries were opened in London, and the P.D.S.A. was treating 70,000 cases a year.

One of the most interesting cases of those early days concerns Dixie, a retriever puppy some six months old, who introduced himself to the P.D.S.A. with one eye closed and much skin and hair missing, after having pulled a pan of boiling water over himself. Later he was run over twice, jumped through a skylight, gashed one of his paws on a broken bottle, fell overboard from a yacht, and had worms, while articles that at various times were removed from his throat included a safety-pin, a cork, and a powder-puff. As a final adventure he chewed up his licence and swallowed it!

hospitals in existence. There is a special X-ray department and an operating theatre, with trained nurses and an anaesthetist in attendance, just as in any hospital for humans.

Behind the hospital buildings are isolation stables, and spacious fields where horses and ponies can run free during convalescence. Many of these horses know nothing of fresh grass and green fields. One horse was led into a field with great difficulty. It would not go through the gate, and it was not until a basinful of oats was used to tempt it that it could be induced to go into the field. At first it loitered near the gate and fence, but gradually it became more venturesome. Then it sampled the grass. What a neigh of delight it gave! And when the time came for it to be brought indoors five men were needed to persuade it.

There is also a special hospital for small animals, treating chiefly cases of wounds, gastritis, mange, eczema, pneumonia, pleurisy, accidents, and so on. There was the case of Paddy, whose owner was a blind man. After a street accident it seemed that Paddy's leg was broken, and that he would no longer be able to lead his master about. The little dog was taken to the P.D.S.A. hospital, where X-ray photographs showed the trouble to be severe strain. A few days' rest and treatment in the ward soon put Paddy on his feet again and he was able to continue his invaluable work once more.

Then there was Satan, a three-weeks-old fox-terrier that was found curled up at the bottom of a 6-foot manhole. The little creature was taken to the P.D.S.A. and soon became a great pet of the ward sisters. Too young to lap, it was fed with a baby's bottle.

Cats are often the sole friends of lonely people, and the P.D.S.A. treats about 600 cats every day of the year. It also treats about 3500 cage-birds annually, a recent case being that of a budgerigar with a broken leg. Matchsticks were used for splints and were kept in place by bandages. The operation, which was one of the most delicate pieces of work to be carried out in a P.D.S.A. dispensary, was highly successful, and the budgie was soon quite well again.

**I**N 1928 the P.D.S.A. built a fine sanatorium on the outskirts of East London. This is situated on thirty acres of land, and is one of the most up-to-date and largest animal

**N**O story of the P.D.S.A. would be complete without mention of its caravan service, which calls in all weathers at hamlets and villages throughout the British countryside.

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Mrs Dickin started this mobile dispensary service in 1923 with a horse caravan that she bought from a gipsy. To-day, the P.D.S.A. runs eighteen motor caravans in Great Britain, each costing an average of £1500 a year to maintain. In a year these caravans cover approximately 200,000 miles and treat over 160,000 cases.

Let us take a single day's itinerary of just one caravan. It may have to cover as many as seventy or eighty miles over all types and conditions of roads, and before it reaches its destination it will probably be stopped many times by people seeking advice and treatment for their pets. There was the car owner who had accidentally run over a cat. While searching frantically for a vet, suddenly he spotted a P.D.S.A. caravan. The patient was treated and the motorist was most relieved and grateful to have found the P.D.S.A. on the scene at such a critical moment.

Later in the day, when stopping for a cup of tea in a very isolated part of the countryside, the caravan superintendent was not a bit surprised to see a lady approaching with her dog. This time the patient was treated for skin trouble. It is almost routine now, he says, that, wherever the caravan stops, someone brings a patient for treatment within a minute or so.

Once the destination is reached there is always a long queue of people waiting with their pets. Perhaps the majority of cases treated are dogs and cats, although patients include a great number of birds, rabbits, tortoises, hamsters, and so on. The superintendent of one caravan reports that his most unusual patient was an owl. It was found

exhausted by its exertions during a gale, and was brought to the P.D.S.A. After two days of careful nursing it was quite well again and was released in suitable surroundings.

IN 1934 Mrs Dickin formed the Busy Bees, or Junior Section of the P.D.S.A., which encourages young people to give practical service in helping the work of treating sick animals. Busy Bees are taught how to care for and protect animals by means of simple talks and through their own paper, the *Busy Bees News*. They also collect 'honey' in the form of silver-paper, used postage-stamps, and similar commodities, which the Society is able to sell. Sometimes they hold children's sales of work, organise concerts and other entertainments, the money raised being devoted to a specific object, such as kennels, medicines, or to buy a licence for a poor child's animal.

The P.D.S.A. trains all its own technical officers. Carefully selected students sit for examinations over a period of four-and-a-half years. The training is very detailed both in medical and surgical treatment. The life of a P.D.S.A. technical officer is by no means easy, for treating sick animals requires both patience and courage. However, there is no finer reward than watching a sick animal recover, and even if it cannot express its gratitude in words, it certainly has its own way of saying 'Thank you.' Records show that many animals, having once received treatment from the P.D.S.A., will return again, of their own free will, unaccompanied, as soon as there is anything wrong with them.

### Young Girl at a Window

*Lean from the window on your morning world.  
These offered flowers have never shone before,  
Nor ever will again.  
These untrod lawns, from shades unborn  
To shadowed end unfurled,  
All yours, all yours. Your kingdom by the right  
Of youth's enchanted reign.  
Lean from the window. Wake, unawakened eyes!  
The May of morning slips away too fast  
To waste an hour in dreaming's enterprise,  
Only to wake at last  
Too late to recognise the present perfect,  
And fall in love with it as perfect past.*

EGAN MACKINLAY.

# The Remarkable Story of Haydn's Head

JAMES SEDDON

AFTER 145 years the skull of Franz Joseph Haydn, the famous Viennese composer, has been returned to his body. On Whit Sunday of last year a body of Viennese citizens and music-lovers made a pilgrimage to Eisenstadt, where the composer's body lay buried—and to the solemn music of Mozart's 'Requiem', played at the original dedication ceremony, the composer's skull was laid in the elaborate iron coffin which had housed his bones since 1820.

The story behind this ceremony is one of the most remarkable in musical history. Haydn died in Vienna, aged seventy-seven, on the sultry last day of May 1809 and was buried immediately in the Hundsthurm churchyard, now known as Haydn Park. His funeral was a modest affair, for he had outlived most of his closest friends. It was not intended that he should remain in Vienna, for just after Haydn's death Prince Esterházy had obtained permission to have the body exhumed. He wished to take Haydn to Eisenstadt, where the composer had lived and worked for thirty years as master of music in the Esterházy household, to have him buried in the family retainers' vault.

But the Vienna of 1809 was a city of political turmoil. On the 12th of May Napoleon's army had taken the city after a short bombardment, and in the ensuing disruption the Prince completely forgot about his intentions of reburial Haydn. Nor might he have remembered but for the visit of a travelling nobleman, Adolphus Frederic, the Duke of Cambridge, who called on the Prince at his magnificent Renaissance-style palace in the latter part of 1820. As befitted a man who was Hungary's richest landlord, the Prince feasted his guest with regal splendour and entertained him with a performance of Haydn's

masterpiece, *The Creation*. After the performance, the Duke proposed a toast, saying: 'Happy the man who had a Haydn in his life—and who now possesses the body of that departed immortal.'

All unwittingly, the Duke had said more than he knew, for the Prince recalled his former plan for bringing Haydn's body to Eisenstadt, and no sooner had the guest departed than arrangements were made for the long-delayed exhumation to be carried out. And so concerned was the Prince that he went along personally to supervise. On 30th October 1820 the cemetery was visited, the coffin opened, and the body uncovered, when, to the horror of all, it was seen that the composer's body was incomplete—the skull was missing and in its place lay a wig.

AT once the Prince ordered an investigation to recover the missing skull. Suspicion fell on Karl Rosenbaum, a highly-placed government official. As it turned out, these suspicions were justified; but it was not for some time that the truth came out. What had in fact happened was that Rosenbaum and three accomplices had obtained access to Haydn's grave a few days after the funeral. Working by lamplight, the men had opened the grave and severed the composer's head with a sharp knife, carrying it away in a box. Besides Rosenbaum, the conspirators included two minor government officials, Ullmann and Jungermann, and an attendant in the Vienna Prison, Johann Nepomuk Peter.

At this point the enigmatic figure of Dr Franz Joseph Gall—or at least his spirit—made its appearance. Dr Gall, a German living in Paris, was renowned at that time as the founder of the 'science' of phrenology.



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He believed that a man's faculties and abilities were expressed in the various swellings on the surface of the brain. He also believed that the outer shape of the brain and the shape of the skull corresponded. Thus, a person conversant with phrenology could, by examining the bumps on a person's head, ascertain not only a man's abilities and character but also his state of mental health.

It appeared that Rosenbaum and Johann Peter were staunch phrenologists, and in order to test Dr Gall's theory Peter was making a collection of skulls. He and Rosenbaum had decided that Haydn possessed a head worthy of examination, and that 'out of reverence' they ought 'to save from destruction this palace of musical art'. Accordingly, they had appropriated the skull, which was, to quote Peter's will, in which he recorded the story, 'carefully cleaned and bleached as far as possible. In accordance with Gall's theories, as set out in his "Prodromus", the skull revealed Haydn's musical sense. In addition, the bridge of the nose gave evidence of the spreading adenoids from which he had suffered when alive.'

After examining the skull, Peter had 'a wooden box made, polished in black and shaped like a sarcophagus, with a golden lyre on top and four glass windows, inside which the skull was laid on a white silk cushion.

**A**LTHOUGH the Prince was mollified when he learned Rosenbaum's reasons for taking the skull, he had no intention of sacrificing his property for the sake of phrenology. He demanded the skull's return, and informed the police. But neither Peter nor Rosenbaum was prepared to relinquish the skull; and owing to the peculiar state of Viennese law in those days the police were powerless to arrest the culprits or impound the stolen property.

On discovering this, the Prince took matters into his own hands and had the houses of the two men searched. But, when questioned, each swore the other had the skull and the searches revealed nothing, though on one occasion Rosenbaum foiled a search-party only by sending his wife to bed with a cold and concealing the skull in the mattress on which she lay. Suspecting what was happening, the Prince had neighbouring houses searched as well, but without success, for he knew that although the Viennese public had

been shocked by the desecration of Haydn's grave they were not anxious to see the skull removed from Vienna by a foreign prince, and there were many people willing to keep it hidden from his search-parties.

At length the Prince sent his personal physician to Rosenbaum offering to buy the skull. A few days later a skull was delivered—but it was that of a twenty-year-old youth, and the Prince, although no expert phrenologist, was not deceived. Rosenbaum then sent along another skull, which was identified as that of an old man aged over seventy. The Prince was satisfied with this skull, but omitted to pay Rosenbaum as he had promised. Rosenbaum did not press the matter. The skull which he had given up was not Haydn's but that of an old man, and had been purloined from an anatomical laboratory. This fact was, however, never discovered by the Prince, who had the spurious skull laid in Haydn's coffin, which, by this time, had been removed to Eisenstadt.

Here the matter might have ended had not Rosenbaum made a confession on his death-bed. He bequeathed the genuine skull to Peter, on condition that it was eventually presented to the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* (Friends of Music Society) in Vienna, who owned many Haydn relics. Peter kept the skull until he died, when his widow, instead of complying with Rosenbaum's request, handed it over to her family physician, Dr Karl Haller. What there was about this skull that made so many people reluctant to part with it, once they got their hands on it, is a problem in psychology that would have taxed Dr Gall himself. Dr Haller not only kept it until he died, but he also passed it on to a famous anatomist, Dr Rokitansky, who, in turn, kept it until he died. It was then presented to the long-suffering Friends of Music by the anatomist's sons, and after a dispute regarding its authenticity was identified as genuine by Professor Julius Tandler, who carefully measured it in 1909.

During the next forty-five years several attempts were made to reunite the skull with Haydn's body—in 1912, in 1932 (the 200th anniversary of Haydn's birth), and in 1939. But wars and politics intervened, and it is only after spending the war years in a bank vault and the succeeding period on exhibition to the public with other relics of Haydn that the skull has now reached its legitimate resting-place.



## The Runt

HENRY C. JAMES

IT is a practice to say of stories that the people and places are products of the author's imagination and have no reference to real places or people. In this case the place is real, and the central character particularly, very decidedly so.

He was a pint-sized Portuguese runt, about ten years old, and the greatest pest possible to the Hotel Urgeirica, which is a luxurious British hotel in the sunshine mountains of central Portugal.

His name, as far as they knew, was José—what else, nobody knew. He was incredibly dirty, and he smelled. His ragged trousers were kept up by the single strand of a worn-out, cast-off pair of suspenders. His shirt was open all the way down, so that his bare stomach showed. His feet were bare, and even dirtier than the rest of him. No matter how warm the sun, he managed to shiver pathetically, giving the impression that he was cold all the way through to his very bones.

He was a beggar, by profession, by design, by necessity, perhaps—and from choice, certainly. As the big cars drove up to the hotel entrance, stopping in front of huge trees of massed mimosa—in full bloom even in January—José would slide out from cover and stand shivering, with his dirty hand out, by the imposing, clean hotel steps, whining,

always whining. 'A penny for bread, please. A penny for bread, please. A penny for bread.' He was persistent and insinuating, if necessary plucking with his dirty fingers at the sleeves of the guests who tried to take no notice of him. He was a continual and very serious embarrassment. He knew the thickets of mimosa and the twists and turns of the grounds better even than the gardener, and, no matter how often he was chased away, he always heard the curs approaching and came back at the psychological moment. 'A penny for bread, please. A penny for bread.'

If the guests took a turn in the garden, or decided on a round of golf on the private golf-course, José would be there, holding out his hand, whining, and following.

Taking life all round, he did very well, so well that he could see no good reason for changing his habits. The fact that he was an embarrassment and an irritation was the hotel's problem. Let them solve it.

IT was ironic that the first time in his life, probably, that he set out to do an honest day's work he found himself in trouble—bad trouble.

It was an afternoon when things were a bit slack at the hotel, and he remembered that he

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had heard that the doctor at Canas was looking for frogs, and paying for them. Finding and catching frogs was something that José thought would be amusing. He found a long stick, made a small basket of willow twigs and fixed it on the end, and set off with the stick over his shoulder.

It was a big green frog which caused the trouble. It was sitting on the scum at the bottom of a well, and when José leaned over to put the net under it, it hopped away—just a foot—and sat with its throat palpitating, looking up at José as if it were laughing at him. He tried again. The frog hopped away another foot. And again.

José leaned over too far, and found himself up to the neck in the dirty scummy water at the bottom of the well. He could keep his head above the water only by standing on his tiptoes. He pushed his bare feet through the mud, feeling his way with his sensitive toes, until he reached the perpendicular sides of the well. He had not yet really begun to understand precisely what had happened to him. That understanding came only when he started to scabble with his fingers against the earthen side of the well. All that happened was that the earth came away as he pulled at it. It came away in flat, thin flakes, not even leaving a depression where he could find a fingerhold. And when once he had pulled away the top flake, he found the earth hard and smooth, impossible for him to dig into.

He was still standing on his tiptoes, and his feet began to get cramp in them. He scratched at the wall of the well until the tips of his fingers were sore and bleeding, but he could make no real impression on it. It was not one of the deepest of the wells—but it was very deep to a small boy at the bottom of it. It was deep enough to drown a man grown unless he could clamber out of it, and José was a small boy of ten.

He tried for a long time, before he started to panic, gritting his teeth and searching with his eyes to see if there was any place at all where some unevenness in the walls might give him a starting-point. But there was none.

The water was cold. It had lain in the shadow during the one week's frost, which was all the winter had given. But it was enough, because the sun never by any chance reached even the top of the well. It was half-hidden by an overhang of granite rocks, and above that there were pine-trees, thick together. It was a well that was used only at very infrequent

intervals in the summer, when a small plot of vegetables near by badly needed water. Apart from that, it was a forgotten well.

José started to shiver in earnest, not the artificial shiver he knew so well how to manipulate when he was wheedling a few escudos out of unwilling visitors to the hotel, but a real shiver which he was unable to control, and which became so pronounced that the scummy water became wrinkled with it.

José began to call out, and then to yell with all the strength of his lungs. But nobody heard him. First, the well was a long way from where men or women might be working in the fields, and second, the funnel of the well itself sent his voice straight upwards, so that before the sound waves of his cries spread they were weakened and lost in a hundred echoes. Even if there had been somebody to hear him, it would have been very difficult to trace exactly where the voice was coming from, and certainly impossible to decide why the boy was crying.

He stopped calling out eventually, because he needed all his strength just to stay with his head above the water. The frog came and looked at him. Its throat was still vibrating, and its eyes were still wide, and perhaps cynical. It had no difficulty sitting on the top of the scum.

José started to swear at it in Portuguese, under his breath. Then he started to cry.

**B**ACK at the hotel there was quite an important tea-party that afternoon, a tea-party which went on until, towards evening, the husbands of the women concerned joined them, and the tea-party became a cocktail-party.

José's absence had been noticed with much relief by the management and the staff of the hotel—and by the guests who had been there before. There was surprise and, even more, relief when José was still absent on the arrival of the various husbands.

Of course, once in the bar, when the time had come to speak of hats and frocks and men, and, later on, of wine, the international situation, and women, José was completely forgotten. Until there was a commotion outside the front entrance, the sort of commotion which threads its way through the portals even of the best hotel. The servants were gathered outside in strength, talking, talking, and listening at the same time—which

is a Portuguese ability—to a woman with bare feet, rough dress, and red, crying eyes. She was the mother of José. She was sure he was lost, sure that something terrible had happened to him. And the hotel was the nearest place, the only place, where she could come immediately for help. Her vociferation and intensity, her sureness that something terrible had happened, finally broke through the mass of talk in the bar, and everybody understood that the small beggar—the everlasting nuisance—was missing.

For a little while they ignored the matter, except for natural enough comments.

'Probably asleep in the back of a car somewhere.'

'Let's be thankful for small mercies.'

'Hope he's still missing to-morrow.'

'And the next day.'

'Yes, another whisky, thank you.'

'You ought to do something about him, you know, Charles.'

'Yes, I know. But what?'

'I don't believe for a moment that Russia has any idea at all of declaring war on Turkey.'

And so on.

The lamentations of the urchin's mother continued, creating uneasiness and discord. After all, he was only a very small boy, ten years old, and if something had happened to him, well, you just can't continue with a cocktail-party, drinking and gossiping, when somebody remembers and remarks on the fact that there are more than a hundred open wells in the immediate surroundings, any one of which is capable of drowning a man who falls into it, let alone a boy of ten.

The cocktail-party broke up, and went looking for José, accompanied by the irritating wails of his mother. She was sure he would be found dead. Charles, the authority of the hotel, had a passing hope that she was right, but common decency and his English background, and his knowledge of the district of the immediate mountains, forced him to accept control of the search.

In passing, it is perhaps necessary to tell a little of the central Portuguese wells. Central Portugal is a dry region, where every small patch of arable land is used to its fullest. Small vineyards, terraced with stone, smaller fields of maize and cabbage, turnip and kale. Underneath the topsoil, breaking through in big outcrops here and there, there is granite, and what water does fall is collected by the granite, and held where the sun cannot touch

it, so that there is nearly always water underneath.

The Portuguese have found it easier, in the mountains, to dig wells, rather than to transport the water by pipes. Pipes are expensive: labour is cheap. And so against almost every small field there is a well. Some of them are only a few metres deep, some of them are more than a hundred feet of round, smooth, open shaft, with never by any chance a fence, or any other way of seeing where the well is, except for the long pole weighted at one end, hooked over the fork of a tree, so that another pole with a bucket at the end of it can be dipped into the water.

THEY found José, after frocks had been torn, shoes wrecked, trousers ruined. He was still alive, but at his last gasp. They carried him back to the hotel, put him into a hot bath, which gradually brought feeling back into his numbed limbs and body. It also took away, washed away, layer after layer of grime, until José stood, clean and brown, and in what should have been his natural state.

The guests were astonished. The boy was beautiful. His body was slim and smooth, brown-skinned, and as shapely as a statue. When his hair was smoothed down, after washing, it was black, shiny, and sleek. His eyes were the deepest brown, eyes that a woman would give years of her life to have—soft, deep, and innocent.

Major Brown, one of the permanent guests of the hotel, voiced the impression of all of them. 'By gad, sir, the boy's a beauty.'

José smiled at him—and at the other guests—shyly. In his natural state he was out of his element, as it were, and certainly out of his element in a tiled bathroom with rubber mats and white fleecy towels.

The Major said suddenly: 'You've got to do something about this boy, Charles. He ruined the best round of golf I ever played yesterday, and he ruined my drinking this evening. You've got to do something.'

'Yes, Major—but what? I've tried persuasion. I've tried authority. I've tried the police. I've tried his mother. What do you suggest?'

Major Brown said, with conviction: 'The same as I did with the most exasperating soldier I ever had under my command.'

'What did you do?'

'I made him a sergeant. Never had another

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day's trouble with him. One of the best sergeants I ever had. The self-respect he got from the authority did the trick. Made a new man of him.'

'How do you suggest I make José a sergeant?' There was hidden sarcasm—and not too hidden—in the voice of the man who had known José long before the Major came to his hotel, and who would probably know José long after the Major had gone home.

The Major said: 'Dress him up in a uniform. Let him meet the cars officially, open the doors officially, take tips officially, not beg for them.'

The women of the party, who had adopted José in a body, thought it a wonderful idea. They put José to bed, quite unnecessarily—after they had taken his measurements—brought the housekeeper and a sewing-machine into the business, and next morning José started on his duties.

It worked perfectly, while that party was at the hotel, and for a week afterwards, for a little more than a week—until the day there was an extremely important lunch gathering, consisting of business men, and their wives, foreign diplomats, even ambassadors.

José met the cars in his uniform, opened the doors, smiled his way to gratuities, and behaved as perfectly as Major Brown's sergeant had ever done. Until the lunch-party was over.

When the guests came back to their cars, the smiling boy in the smart uniform was no longer there. In his place there was a ragged, dirty urchin, with bare feet and bare stomach, his worn-out trousers held up by a piece of cast-off suspender. He was shivering, holding out a dirty hand, and whining: 'Money for bread, please. Money for bread, please. Money for bread.'

An American woman gave him a fifty-escudo note. She said: 'Poor kid. It's terrible the way some children live in Europe.'

The management and staff of the hotel, who were gathered on the imposing stone steps to say good-bye, were horrified. One of the white-jacketed porters tried surreptitiously to grab José and hustle him out of sight. But José had had far too much experience of such

moments to let any mere porter catch him. He slipped round the back of two cars, and held his shivering hand in front of the ambassador himself.

The porter tried to interfere.

'Let the boy be. Let the boy be. Here.' It was another fifty-escudo note.

The hotel was ashamed, angry, and thoroughly uncomfortable.

They caught José only after all the cars had gone. They hustled him inside. They were still angry, and very exasperated. Only José kept his calmness. He was quite happy and satisfied. In fact, he was jubilant at the success of his scheme.

'But why, José? Why? Why? Why? When you had your lovely uniform, and permission to open the car doors, and to keep all the money they gave you, why did you want to beg again?'

José looked up at them with eyes as big, as brown, as soft as ever—and as innocent. He explained. Of course he loved his uniform, and the importance it gave him—also the tips he got. But he had found that when they were going away, too many of the cars remembered the smart boy who had wheeled money from them as they arrived—and too many of them decided that one tip was enough.

José's eyes were even more innocent as he assured them, quite logically, that after the guests had eaten the very wonderful food of the hotel, and drunk the very wonderful wines, he was quite sure very few of them would recognise him as the same boy if he became the old José again. Only when the cars were going away of course. Only after the people had left the hotel, you understand. He would not dream of doing the hotel an injury—after they had been so kind to him.

But no persuasion or argument could shake his ten-year-old Portuguese conviction that once the hotel, once the people inside the hotel, had, as it were, got all *they* could from the guests, it was his personal right and privilege, even his duty, now that he was part of the hotel, to squeeze as much more from them as he could, in the best way he could devise. Only by being as real a financial success outside, as he was sure they were inside, could he show them his new understanding of the hotel—and his gratitude. Which he was determined to do.



# The Clubs of London

ROBERT WOODALL

WHEN that inveterate clubman, Samuel Johnson, was asked by an acquaintance why he frequented clubs, he replied: 'Sir, the chair of a full and pleasant town club is perhaps the throne of human felicity.' Certainly generations of well-to-do Englishmen have, by their predilection for club-life, seemed to support this dictum. There have been clubs in London for centuries, and, although the earliest of them exhibited few of the characteristics which to-day distinguish their august successors in Pall Mall and St James's Street, they are at least worthy of mention in any attempt to trace the development of these peculiarly British institutions.

As far back as the reign of Henry IV there was a club in London, known as La Court de Bone Compaignie, which, from the incomplete accounts of it that remain, was apparently a sort of dining-club. Dining-clubs were also fairly common during the Elizabethan period. There was, for example, the Bread Street Club, which met at the famous Mermaid Tavern and is traditionally supposed to have been founded by Sir Walter Raleigh. There was also the Apollo, whose headquarters were at the Devil Tavern by Temple Bar, and whose chief member was Ben Jonson.

Such clubs as these, however, had no real corporate existence. The members met, they ate and drank and talked, but simply as a collection of individuals temporarily united for a common purpose—in this case, conviviality. We must seek the true beginnings of the clubs as we know them to-day in the coffee-houses that were established in London in the middle of the 17th century.

The coffee-houses were, from their inception, extraordinarily popular institutions. Their appeal was perhaps not so much that they dispensed a novel and pleasant beverage—although coffee was, of course, much valued for its own sake—as that they soon developed

into centres where people could hear and discuss the news. This, in an age when the dissemination of that commodity was nothing like so efficiently managed as it is now, was a great attraction. Indeed, the patrons of the coffee-houses indulged so freely in gossip of a political nature that Charles II attempted, unsuccessfully, to suppress the places on the ground that they were the resorts of 'idle and disaffected persons'.

One of the results of this attempt was to strengthen immeasurably the bond of fellowship that already existed between the customers of each coffee-house. For men had got into the habit of going to the same coffee-house day after day, so that, quite naturally, they came to regard the other customers as their friends and casual visitors almost as interlopers. Moreover, although the coffee-houses were ostensibly as open to the public as the inns, the regular customers soon began to claim special privileges for themselves. For example, they always appropriated the seats near the fire, and such was the power of the unwritten law that the stranger would no more think of trying to occupy one of these seats than of cutting off his arm.

With this in mind, it is not difficult to understand how, very gradually, the regular customers of a coffee-house turned themselves into a club. As time went on, the proprietor would set aside a room for their private use. Later he would reserve other rooms, until finally he would suggest that in return for a promise of continued support he would close his house to the public and cater for them alone. Then, when the proprietor died, the members would decide to purchase the premises and install their own managers.

IT was in this manner that White's (1693), Boodle's (1762), and Brooks's (1764), three

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of the oldest and most exclusive clubs existing to-day, were founded. From the first, these clubs, whose names commemorate the proprietors of the establishments from which they sprang, were haunts of the fashionable and well-born. In their early days, however, they were far from being the respectable institutions they have since become. Behind their walls the 18th-century gentleman's passion for the wager and the bottle was given full rein. White's, which, to be precise, was originally a chocolate-house, had a particularly unsavoury reputation, so much so, indeed, that Dean Swift, every time he passed its doors, cursed it as 'the bane of half the English aristocracy.'

The members gambled away their ancestral estates and were especially fond of laying bets about the longevity of their male friends or the fertility of their female ones. In fact, as the club's betting-book reveals, no subject was considered too trivial for a wager. 'Mr Cavendish bets Mr H. Brownrigg 2/1 that he does not kill the bluebottle fly before he goes to bed' is a typical example of the lengths to which the sporting proclivities of members led them.

Yet, in spite of the rakehell atmosphere of these and other clubs of the period, at times they exerted much political influence. From 1783, when Pitt was elected a member, White's became a great Tory stronghold. At the same time Brooks's, across the road, was the home of Charles James Fox and the Whigs. At both places the weightiest matters concerning the political life of the nation were discussed, and it is not difficult to imagine the two factions, separated only by the width of St James's Street, sitting over their cups into the small hours, while evolving a plan to confound their opponents in the House next day.

**A**LTHOUGH the coffee-house may be regarded as the chief progenitor of the club, few of the clubs which actually began as coffee-houses survived the 18th or early 19th centuries. Most of the important clubs existing to-day are products of the Victorian age or the years immediately preceding it. At the end of the Napoleonic Wars, for example, London was full of officers of both Services who needed not only food and lodging but also centres where they could keep in touch with their comrades of the battlefield.

To this end the Guards' Club and the United Service Club were founded in 1813 and 1815 respectively. Their popularity was such that during the next two decades other Service clubs, including the Army and Navy, the Oriental, and the Junior United Service, were founded to accommodate those officers who for one reason or another could not gain or were not eligible for admittance to the others.

The establishment of the Service clubs was symptomatic of the change that was coming over the institution of the club. Whereas up to this time there had not, generally speaking, been any attempt to restrict the membership of a club to men of the same tastes or occupations, there was now a definite tendency in this direction. The Travellers' Club, founded in 1819 on a suggestion of Lord Castlereagh, was a resort of gentlemen who had travelled at least 500 miles from London in a straight line. The Oxford and Cambridge Club, founded by Lord Palmerston in 1830, was described as 'an association of Gentlemen educated at those universities and for promoting and continuing a mutual interest and fellowship among them.'

The 1830's saw the foundation of the two leading political clubs, the Carlton and the Reform. The Carlton has been a Tory stronghold since 1832, and as most of the Tory M.P.s and peers of each generation belong to it, political moves and counter-moves have long been discussed here, and doubtless still are. It was at the Carlton, in 1922, that the famous party meeting which caused the downfall of Mr Lloyd George's Coalition Government took place. Up to the Second World War the club occupied a stately building in Pall Mall, designed for it by Sir Charles Barry, but when this was badly damaged in an air-raid it took over the premises of Arthur's Club in St James's Street, where it still remains.

The Reform, which dates from 1834, owes its existence to the desire of a group of prominent Liberals, headed by Lord Grey, to establish a club which was to be an influential centre of Whig Liberalism. Its premises in Pall Mall are considered in many quarters to be architecturally the finest of all the London clubs. At all events, Macaulay, who, as a member, may not have been altogether unbiased, asserted that the building was worthy of Michelangelo. One of the features of the Reform is its dining-room, which is so

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long that waiters are frequently said to forget what they have been sent for by the time they reach the kitchen. Hence the probably apocryphal story of the member who gently rebuked a waiter bringing the wrong dish with the words: 'My dear fellow, this is the Reform, not the Revolution.'

Close by the Reform is the club which, if the quality of its membership be any criterion, is the most distinguished of all—the Athenæum. Bishops, judges, statesmen, scientists, authors, artists, in short, men of what A. J. Balfour called 'undiluted distinction' in all walks of life, abound at the Athenæum. The club was founded by John Wilson Croker in 1824 and has occupied Decimus Burton's neo-Greek structure in Pall Mall since 1831. As befits a club whose members are remarkable for their learning, its library has from the first been one of its chief ornaments. Its collection of works on almost every subject has no rival in clubland, and it would be difficult to say how many speeches, sermons, or philosophical disquisitions have been composed with the aid of this veritable treasure-house of knowledge.

**R**IGHT through the 19th century the number of London's clubs continued to increase, until to-day there is scarcely an important human interest or activity which is not represented by a club. As, however, there are over a hundred clubs of the first rank,

it is impossible to do more than mention a minority of them.

Thus, literary men have the Savile, generally considered to be a waiting-place for the Athenæum, and the Savage, which prides itself on its Bohemianism. Actors congregate at the Garrick and the Green Room, diplomats at the St James's, which is not, as one might expect, in St James's Street, but in Piccadilly. There are various clubs devoted to sport, of which the National Sporting Club, the Bath, and the Turf are perhaps the best known, while the Royal Automobile and Royal Aero Clubs are dedicated to two of the principal interests of the age.

All in all, it may be doubted whether the clubs of to-day differ fundamentally from their Victorian counterparts. Of superficial differences there are probably many—wine-lists, for instance, are not what they used to be—but the club exists to satisfy the same basic needs. It provides a man with an agreeable refuge from the world and, if he be so inclined, from his own womenfolk. It brings him into contact with men of similar interests, with whom he can talk, dine, play cards, or study the racing results and Stock Exchange reports as they come through on the ticker-tape. And, although the general atmosphere of clubland is probably freer and easier than it was, the clubs themselves are as inextricably bound up with the public life of the country as ever, and are still valued as oases of quiet in a noisy world.

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### The Loveliest Verses

(From the French of Edmond Haraucourt, 1856-1942)

*The loveliest verses are those that we never can write,  
They are blossoms of dream whose odour the soul respires,  
Or smiles of a phantom, or sparks from eternal fires,  
Or voices borne up from the plain to the mountain-height.*

*All space is haunted with poems through viewless ways,  
A forbidden country, an Eden's inviolate plot  
Where the sin of the art of the singer may trespass not;  
Yet there if thou lovest me well thine eyes may gaze.*

*Some eve when the fervour of love shall our souls unite,  
In silence—a silence that swoons in the twilight air,  
Come, lean thy soul o'er my soul, and read thou there  
The verses I heard, I heard, but could never write.*

WILFRID THORLEY.

# Twice-Told Tales

## LIII.—Chelsea-Bun Jack

[From *Chambers's Journal* of May 1855]

**B**UNS may, we should think, be pretty safely numbered among old friends. The verdict of the nursery is unanimous in their favour. Thousands of pairs of tiny eyes will sparkle, thousands of rosy little mouths will water, at the mention of that homely triumph of confectionery—a bun. Other countries have their national dainties—their peculiar pastry. The bun is of British origin, and of patriotic principles; for it is in England, and in England alone, that it is ever to be found.

The Chelsea-bun is of a coarse stamp; square in shape, greasy and sticky in texture, its mass of dough faintly dotted with currants, and its outside smeared with sugar and butter, it appears to the eyes of a grown-up person anything but an inviting treat. The Chelsea-bun is less frequently seen in the shop of a legitimate pastry-cook, than figuring on the trays of wandering cake-sellers. It is a roving vagrant-bun, made by strange manufacturers in unsavoury alleys, and hawked about the country by bawling venders. It has its origin in the midst of dirt and discomfort; and its principal purchasers are the unfastidious little urchins who make a play-ground of the streets.

When we used to visit our little brothers at school, we often remarked, in the dusty play-ground, a white-haired, very upright old man, whose erect figure combined with his wooden leg to point him out as an old soldier. He was the bun-seller of the school, duly licensed by Dr Switchem, the head-master. The boys called him Chelsea-bun Jack. I really think they were fond of him; and I am sure they regarded him as a personage little less important than the Duke of Wellington or Sir Thomas Picton, about whom he told endless stories to a very young audience. Jack was a veteran of the Peninsular War, and an out-pensioner of Chelsea Hospital. He eked out

his pension by selling buns, the mode of manufacturing which he was supposed to have learned at Chelsea; and every day when the sun shone, he might be seen in the playground, or the cricket-field, seated on a stone or the stump of a tree, with his basket by his side. The boys, especially the younger ones, were fond of talking to old Chelsea-bun Jack, who had seen so much of life and death, and travelled the world so widely. They would cluster round him, and listen for hours to his long tales of the battles and hardships he had witnessed in Spain and Portugal, of the hot campaign in Egypt, and the struggle at Waterloo. It was curious to watch the white-haired old soldier descanting on themes of slaughter and carnage to his attentive young hearers, and to mark how the urchins would hold their breath at the most interesting point of the narrative, and how their blooming cheeks would grow pale as the veteran described, with the fidelity of an eye-witness, the terrible scenes among which his youth had been spent. The old man's buns, with their name of Chelsea-buns, suggestive of medals worn on scarred breasts, and ancient human relics of by-gone wars, had, so to speak, a military flavour to the palates of his laughing, rosy customers. One lad, the wag of the school, vowed that they tasted of gunpowder. The curly-pated boys who listened to the veteran's tales, and invested their weekly half-pence in his buns, are grown men now, playing their own parts on the bustling stage of life. The old soldier sleeps beneath the green turf and gray stones of the village church-yard; but we doubt not that many of those whose youthful blood ran cold at his tales of fighting and pillage still preserve in a corner of their memories the recollection of the venerable face and moving narratives of Chelsea-bun Jack.



## A Snake Story

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LORD DUNSANY

A LONG experience has taught me by now to have considerable trust in Jorkens's ability to evade the snares of that unsporting clique in our club that, by steering the conversation far from all fields of his adventure, would keep the topic of discussion among themselves, or, like mere dogs in the manger, would prevent us from hearing one of the exploits of Jorkens. And yet, in spite of this trust I have learned to have in him, there was one day when I could see no possibility of one of those tales arising from the topic under discussion, a topic, needless to say, most elaborately forced on the Billiards Club by that clique.

They had chosen for their discussion children's toys, knowing, of course, that Jorkens was in the club; and, by the time he had reached the long table at which we were having our lunch, this topic had been thrust upon all of us and was under the fullest discussion. I certainly saw no chance, as Jorkens walked in, of any path that could lead from that discussion to any of those warm lands in which Jorkens's memory basks. Yet Jorkens, to my surprise, joined in at once. 'They make them much too elaborate nowadays,' he said. 'When I was young we were given plain wooden bricks to play with, and

with plenty of scope allowed for our imagination we employed it in our architecture, and I am sure we got much more fun from it than any that children can get from the elaborate and very expensive mechanical toys that people give them to-day. I remember some children in a garden in California playing with a large teddy bear which actually walked about. Much too elaborate for children. They would have enjoyed themselves just as much with the simple kind of bear and a couple of boot-buttons for eyes. I don't think people wear buttons on their boots now.'

Still we had no idea that any tale of adventure could possibly emerge from this, and that clique that I have mentioned let Jorkens talk on. 'They had wound up their teddy bear,' he continued, 'and it was walking away from me, and two children were walking one on each side of it, and one behind. None of them was looking at me. I was sitting, or perhaps I should say reclining, in a comfortable long chair, doing really very little except enjoying the sunlight, which they have all the year round in California, and perhaps I was watching the humming-birds getting honey from flowers, when an intuition or premonition, call it what you will, warned me to look to my left. There was no reason to cause me



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to look to the left of my chair: there was only that premonition. So I looked.

'My chair was just by a path of pale-yellowish stone slabs that were laid down right through the garden, and on the path was a pale-yellowish snake checkered with black squares, or rather what they call diamonds, and it was gazing at me with its blazing orange eyes. My first impulse was to shout to warn the children, who were quite close, for that absurd teddy bear did not move very fast; and my second, and I will admit it was very close on the first, was to run away. But I could not do either. Any who have looked right into the eyes of a snake will understand that resulting helpless paralysis that is the principal means by which snakes get their food. It is no strange power in them, but a weakness in most other forms of life, which makes them helpless like that in the gaze of a snake's eyes. I don't know why we and birds and rabbits are all so helpless, but I suppose that, unless some animals were, the snakes would starve.

'Well, that's how it was. I was simply petrified, and those children were much too close to the snake, and I was closer still. The beast's eyes were terribly bright in the Californian sunlight. The Greeks must have known something of that paralysis in the presence of snakes that I was feeling then, when they made the Gorgon Medusa, who could turn men to stone, wear snakes in her hair. I heard the children laughing, and the incongruity of their laughter curdled my blood still further. I opened my mouth to warn them, but my voice also was paralysed. A weakness; a weakness; I admit it; and but for that weakness in the presence of snakes, which seems to be pretty generally felt, snakes would, as I have already pointed out, starve. And so I lay helpless there, and the three children were looking the other way and laughing.'

'Where do you say this was?' asked Terbut.

'In California,' said Jorkens. 'I told you.'

'Yes—but what particular part of Califor-

nia?' persisted Terbut. 'It's a large country.'

'Really,' I put in, 'we don't want to trouble Jorkens with details like that. Let's hear his tale of the snake. I've heard that snakes had that power. I'd like to hear about it.'

'No, no,' said Jorkens. 'I'll give you the fullest details. I'll give you the names and addresses of the children. They are older now. Two lived in one house, and one in another. I'll give you both addresses, and you can write and ask them. They'll corroborate me all right. I like to be able to give you details like that now and then. I like it. It enables me to show sceptical people how useless their scepticism is to them. And it may serve as a check on any other points that I may have called your attention to at one time or another.' And he wrote down the names and addresses upon the back of an envelope and handed it over to Terbut.

Terbut accepted it rather grudgingly, but when Jorkens went on with the story he interrupted.

'Yes, the eyes of that snake—' Jorkens said.

'Well, we see you survived,' said Terbut.

'What happened to the children?'

'The little devils,' said Jorkens, 'the little devils. They deserved to be bitten by snakes, thoroughly bitten—one rattlesnake to each child. That would have taught them to play tricks with snakes. Pampered with realistic toys like that, it made them the callous little ruffians they were. That snake, that was one of those unnecessary things I was talking about, the most expensive and lifelike toy. If they wanted to play with snakes, a bit of old rope would have been quite enough for them, with perhaps a dash of green paint. But a thing like that, why, it deceived even me, who have seen hundreds of snakes, who have seen one flowing past one of my boots like water, and a deadly one too. Yes, it deceived even me. And they had meant it to, the little devils. They had put it beside my chair, and they thought it funny.'

'I think it was, rather,' said Terbut.

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## Possession

*With a strayed celestial sunbeam  
I tie your brighter hair:  
Not loosed till I unbind it—  
Scarce God himself would dare!*

A. CRAIG.

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## Science at Your Service

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### GLASS FOR STRENGTH

**A**N item in these columns in April described a new motor-cycle with the bodywork made mainly from moulded plastics. The type of plastics material used is a combination of glass fibres and plastics bonding-resin, the modern fulfilment of a quest that began over forty years ago when one of the great pioneers of the plastics industry, Baekeland, tried to produce a strong composite material by sticking vegetable fibres together with a phenolic resin. Even then, before the First World War, the use of glass fibres or fine-drawn glass filaments was regarded as a possibility, but the heavy pressure needed to make synthetic resins set broke the glass threads. Yet, avoiding the use of heavy pressure led to frothing and bubbling, because in the chemical changes that caused bonding the resins released water as steam. It was not until the Second World War that new synthetic resins became available that could set under heat and without evolution of water. To-day, a variety of such resins is available. Glass fibres in the form of a cloth or felt can be thoroughly wetted with these resins in their initial liquid form; then by heat or through chemical additions the resin substance polymerises (i.e. its molecules join together to form much larger molecules), and the whole mass is bound together into a solid structure. Materials made in this way have exceptional strength. They can be as strong as steel or as light as aluminium; indeed, for the same tensile strength, glass-fibre-reinforced plastics are the lightest rigid materials yet known.

One use to which this new type of material is being put is the manufacture of translucent corrugated roofing-sheets. A particular product of this kind is claimed to be shatterproof. A 9-pound brick dropped upon it from a height of 15 feet will not penetrate it. This is not surprising when it is realised that another use of the glass-fibre-reinforced material is in the making of crash-helmets. Nevertheless, the light transmission is at least as good as that of wired glass, and possibly is slightly superior. It will withstand a man's weight

when walked upon; it can be nailed, sawn, or drilled without splintering or cracking; yet it is very light, weighing only 8 ounces per square foot. It is available in various sizes of sheet and with some variety in corrugation size.

### LOCK PROTECTION

Most front-doors in this country are protected by cylinder-type locks, but if a hole is cut through the door or, more easily in many cases, if an adjacent portion of glass-window space is cut, the handle inside the door can be turned. A new device on the market is a strong metal guard or shield that can be fitted over the entire lock, making it impossible for the handle to be contacted unless the guard is removed from inside the house. Two patterns are made—a standard pattern for wooden doors and another pattern for metal doors or narrow wooden frames. In cream or green matt finish, which may be painted over, or in gloss black, this device costing only a few shillings greatly increases the burglar-protection of the modern lock.

### SIMPLIFYING PAPERHANGING

A device to ease one of the main tasks of hanging wallpaper seems likely to become widely popular with the modern school of 'do-it-yourself' decorators. It is a clip 22 inches in length, with three springs to ensure that it grips the piece of wallpaper firmly. A 5-inch wide flange is attached to each side of the clip and this may be used in exactly the same way that a picture-hook is used; thus, the piece of wallpaper is held in a vertical position by being hung to the picture-rail. In this position paste can be applied to its reverse side; the piece of paper can then be turned round, again suspended from the picture-rail, and finally pressed into position on the wall. The cumbersome use of tables, trestles, etc., during paperhanging is thus eliminated. The length of the clip slightly exceeds that of a trimmed piece of wallpaper. It cannot, of course, prove helpful in rooms without picture-rails.

## CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

### ANTIBIOTICS FOR RACEHORSES

Attention has previously been drawn to the remarkable effect of traces of certain antibiotics used as additions to pig and poultry diet. Growth-rates are hastened and market weight is reached in lessened time. Preliminary experimental work, jointly conducted by the Agricultural Research Council and the National Stud, has indicated that additions of aureomycin to foals' diet brings much the same benefit. In the spring of 1953 twelve new-born foals were taken for the aureomycin trial; six were fed without its addition to the normal diet and six with the addition of 100 milligrams (or about 1/280th of an ounce) per day. Each set of six was chosen at random from twelve. After 5 months the aureomycin-fed foals had grown 14 per cent faster than the other six, and were 60 pounds heavier on average. At 9 months, the difference in rate of growth was 10 per cent. At this point the aureomycin additions ceased to be given, and 4 months later—when the foals were 13 months old—the difference in growth-rates of the two groups was 7 per cent, a difference that was regarded as too small to be significant in an experiment with so few test-animals.

The implications of this test are exceedingly interesting. If full weight can be reached sooner, is maturity—from the training viewpoint—also reached sooner? This has to be found out from further experimental work. In the initial experiment foals of poorish stock were used for reasons of economy and they were unlikely in any case to have racing qualities at maturity. If training could be started at an earlier age as a result of aureomycin feeding, producing a two-year-old with, say, a three-year-old's racing capacity is brought within the bounds of possibility. A second implication of great importance is that foals of good stock that develop slowly—the 'poor doers'—might be induced to develop at normal rate by adding aureomycin to their diet, thus removing what is sometimes a most disappointing handicap to an expensive foal's potentialities. Time lost in developing full maturity cannot easily be regained in later training.

It is not known whether increased dosage with aureomycin would hasten weight-development more; but it was only a small amount that was given to each foal in this first test—in the whole 9 months each foal received totally just under one ounce of the antibiotic supplement. It is also not known whether the

growth-rate improvement would have been maintained had the diet additions been continued after the foals had reached the ages of 9 months.

The use of drugs to stimulate racehorse performance is, of course, highly irregular, but their use as diet supplements during young growth can be looked upon in a quite different light. In any case, it is doubtful whether antibiotics used in this way can accurately be defined as 'drugs'.

### GARDENER'S KNEE-PADS

Whether keen gardeners suffer from housemaid's knee is perhaps not known for certainty, but there would seem to be some probability; when the soil is wet there are a good many cultural operations that are neglected or imperfectly done because kneeling is avoided. A British firm that specialises in all garden requirements has now introduced two forms of knee-pad, made of expanded rubber, light in weight and long-lasting. They are completely waterproof. The smaller type merely cover the knee area. They are fastened to the knees with straps above and below the kneecap. When attached, they do not impede normal walking. The larger type cover the leg area from knee to instep and they are shaped to fit comfortably. These are fastened by a single strap just below the knee. They raise the wearer 3 inches from the ground-level when kneeling, and this has proved to be a great advantage by obviating much of the foot discomfort developed during a longish period of kneeling.

### A TEA-DISPENSER

With apparently ever-rising prices for tea in a world whose demand steadily exceeds supply, a new kitchen fitment that dispenses an exactly measured teaspoonful of tea may be both economical and convenient. It is a caddy-container that can be fixed to the wall or to a larder-door by back-attached screw-brackets. The bottom end narrows to a dispensing aperture through which the measured amount of tea falls into the teapot. The tea is released by pressing a button, each button-pressing allowing a teaspoonful measure to pass out of the stock of tea held in the container. The finish is in pastel-shade colours. The front carries the word 'TEA', but the appliance can also be supplied without this lettering for use with other household materials, e.g. soap-powder, detergents, etc.

## SCIENCE AT YOUR SERVICE

### PLASTICS PLUMBING

Metal as the conventional material for domestic piping is gradually being challenged by synthetics. It might have been challenged by glass, had glass not been so easily breakable; even so, there has been a considerable modern use of heat-resistant glass for special industrial pipe-systems. A British company is now manufacturing plastics piping in all standard sizes up to 2 inches. It is light and flexible, and it can withstand heavy pressures, including that caused by the expansion of water into ice. The tubing can be used in long runs without joints. However, when jointing is necessary, screwed or compression joints may be used; also, radiant heat may be used to obtain a welded joint simply by softening the two tube ends and pressing them together. The tubing is at present available in black or white finish, but coloured finishes can be provided on special order. It is made in two gauges—normal and heavy. With the normal gauge, threading is not possible, so that joints cannot be made by screwing. Whether a domestic market for this synthetic piping will develop swiftly remains to be seen; there is, in any case, a wide industrial market, for the plastics material can handle all kinds of corrosive liquids and will carry food-liquids like beer, milk, vinegar, etc., without risk of contamination.

### EASIER WEEDING

The idea of long-handled garden-tools for saving kneeling or stooping is not exactly novel, but a new version of the long-handled weeder merits attention. One arm is a wood handle; to this is attached a pair of toothed metal jaws, one jaw on the wood handle end, the other hinge-connected and operated by a rod that runs parallel to the wood handle. The fixed jaw can be placed on or beside the weed and moving the rod then brings the other hinged jaw into the closing position to pull the weed. It is said to be usable on difficultly-tough weeds, and on clearing brambles, as well as on softer vegetation. The tool is 3 feet 4 inches long. The metal parts are paint-surfaced.

### AN ELECTRIC BROOM

Modern plastics materials frequently generate static electricity and, as they are non-conducting, the charge built up is very slowly dissipated. This has proved disadvantageous in some of their applications, or at any rate it has introduced an operative defect that must be given attention from time to time—e.g., cycle windshields made of plastics attract dust because the friction of air-flow gradually builds up a dust-attracting electrostatic charge. A new broom deliberately utilises this property of plastics materials. The brush-head fibres are made of polystyrene filaments; in use, the friction creates static electricity, attracting dust to the broom and preventing it from flying upwards. It is found that very small-particled dust collects in the broom-head, but larger-particled dirt, hairs, or fibre threads roll into a ball. It is necessary to clean the broom fairly frequently with soap and water. The broom-head, also made of a plastics material, is available in red, blue, green, or cream; the handle has a cream enamel finish and carries a knob for hanging. The price of the broom is remarkably low.

### WHEELING THE DUSTBIN

In many areas to-day the position in which the household dustbin is most conveniently placed for daily use is not also the position from which the local clearance service is prepared to remove and empty the bin. The weekly task of moving the full or fairly-full bin is arduous for elderly people. Several firms have developed the wheeled carrier for large shopping-baskets so that it may be used for dustbins. One such model, whose use has been demonstrated on TV this year, is constructed of tubular steel, with a stove-enamelled finish, and has rubber-tyred wheels and a handle with a rubber grip; the axle, however, is made of solid steel. It enables even a full dustbin to be easily moved from the rear of a house to the pavement, and the effort required is not appreciably increased if steps have to be traversed. For price and strength of construction this model can be recommended.

TO CORRESPONDENTS who wish fuller information regarding new inventions, publications, etc. mentioned here, addresses will be furnished, when possible, if (and only if) a stamped addressed envelope or postcard for a reply be sent to the Editor, *Chambers's Journal*, 11 Thistle Street, Edinburgh. To avoid delays, requests of this kind from correspondents abroad will be forwarded to the manufacturer or agent if stamps, postal orders, or imperial or international reply coupons are enclosed for the purpose. The issue of the *Journal* and the heading of the paragraph in which the object of inquiry is described should be given in order to facilitate reference.

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## Vines on Open Walls

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THERE are fashions in horticulture just as there are in clothes for women. In the Victorian age there was a craze for fuchsias and petunias, for pelargoniums and cacti, and now, once again, we find these plants popular. In 1818 a certain Joseph Kirke exhibited some excellent royal muscadine grapes before the Royal Horticultural Society, grown from an outdoor vine, and to-day there is a great resurge in outdoor grape-growing, though perhaps the varieties we grow now are not quite the same as they were a hundred years ago.

Of course, last year's wet, cold, sunless season did much to discourage the cultivation of the vine out of doors, but we may easily find that 1955 is a scorcher, with the result that those of us who have outdoor vines will get a really wonderful crop. I suppose the great scourge in a wet year is mildew, but one can do much nowadays to discourage this disease by the use of the finer sulphur dusts, which can be bought to-day for application through a suitable dust-gun.

Vine borders in the greenhouse are usually specially prepared, but grapes will grow outside quite happily in almost any good garden-soil. The great thing is to ensure good drainage, coupled with proper aeration. It may be necessary to dig a hole at least 2 feet deep, 4 feet long, and 2 feet wide, and into the bottom of this to place clinkers or broken brickbats to the depth of about 6 inches. On top of this a layer of turves can be placed, 3 inches thick, with the grass side downwards. The soil may then be put back, and during this process a fish-fertiliser with a 10 per cent potash content may be added at the rate of 4 oz. to the square yard. If the land should be very heavy, sedge-peat may be incorporated at the same time, to the amount of three good 2-gallon bucketfuls to the size of the hole mentioned.

Always plant an outdoor vine in a nice sunny situation and where it will be open to an occasional fresh breeze. The southern aspect is desirable, though I have seen vines growing satisfactorily in the south of England

on a west or east wall. The great thing is that the exposure should be warm. A sloping roof to the same aspect can often be used. When vines are purchased in pots and grown hardily, they can be planted almost any month; it is only necessary to soak the roots in water for an hour and then to plant in the soil so that 3 inches of the stem is buried. The roots should be spread out evenly, and as each shovelful of soil is put into position, it should be firmed.

It is possible to grow vines as cordons, when they may be planted 3 feet apart. In this case, the laterals are cut back each year so that spurs are formed. The other method is to allow the vines to cover a much greater space, and so the rod is cut down to within 18 inches of soil-level, and if three shoots result, one is trained perpendicularly and the other two horizontally, one to the right and the other to the left. The perpendicular shoot is then pruned to 4 feet from soil-level and, once again, two laterals are taken running parallel to the original ones.

It is possible to allow the vine to scramble all over the wall without any particular method of training. In this case, however, only one shoot is allowed to grow up in the spring after planting, and to ensure that this takes place all the buds except one should be rubbed off as they burst. The rod that is allowed to grow is then pruned back to the desired height the following winter and the branches that develop from this are allowed to grow naturally.

The berries should be thinned to secure the best results, and 50 per cent of the little fruits should be cut off with a sharp pair of scissors when they are the size of marrowfat peas. Perhaps the best varieties to grow in these circumstances for table are *Perle de Czaba*, a muscat, *Chasselas Vibert* and *Chasselas Rose*, both of these being non-muscats.

I shall be glad to help readers with their gardening problems. Write to me through the Editor, kindly enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for the reply.

W. E. SHEWELL-COOPER, M.B.E., N.D.H.

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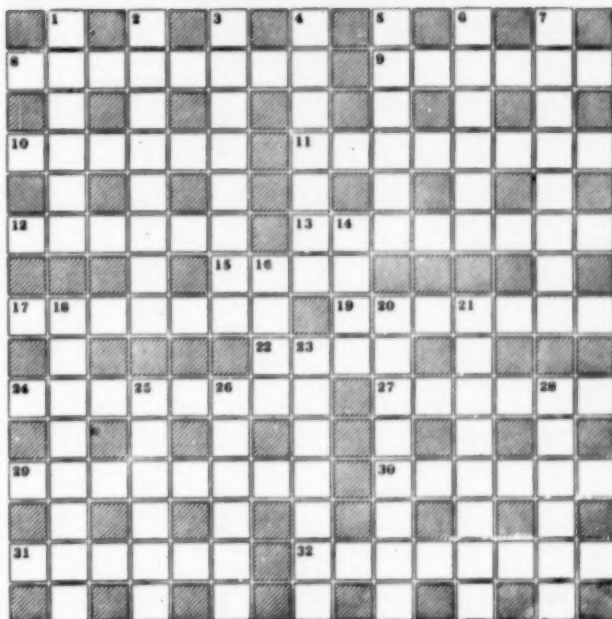


# CHAMBERS'S DICTIONARY

## CROSSWORD No. 13

### ACROSS

- 8 Unwell in roast for fortress (8).
- 9 Do return, it's not yours. Smell 'em! (6).
- 10 Ham or humbug (6).
- 11 Coming out, mostly mingling (8).
- 12 Spanish Franco, minus last letter (6).
- 13 In the main, an admission of tardiness is set apart (8).
- 15 Irritating urge (4).
- 17 The hell of a place! (7).
- 19 Enliven, with partner to finish (7).
- 22 Commanding officer meets mother in stupor (4).
- 24 A hundred queer favourites on the tea table (8).
- 27 The opposite of shout down? (6).
- 29 Kind of Yee Man (8).
- 30 Idiotic start for colloquialisms (6).
- 31 Football Association on quarry makes short commons (6).
- 32 Cleaner starts party games (8).



Composed by JOAN BENYON

18

### DOWN

- 1 Modern stabling (6).
- 2 Mass movement, with heavy tread to the fore (8).
- 3 Insect in open country for bananas (8).
- 4 Relates to origin—you get the low down to begin with (7).
- 5 Tooled, as a sword blade (6).
- 6 Verandah with horse inside (6).
- 7 Runs across the nave (8).
- 14 Bogus form of hams (4).

### DOWN (contd.)

- 16 It would be understood if I were in diplomacy (4).
- 18 Continental (6).
- 20 You know what sailors are! (8).
- 21 Sweet to find under the icing (8).
- 23 May hide its head but keeps its tail up (7).
- 25 Wizard bird (6).
- 26 Grudged and finally competed (6).
- 28 Forces which have to do the first half (6).

Three prizes of book tokens to the value of ten shillings and sixpence each will be awarded to the senders of the first correct solutions opened.

*Entries must arrive not later than the 16th May.*

Envelopes should be clearly marked **CROSSWORD** in the top left-hand corner. The closing date unavoidably confines the entry to those resident in Great Britain, N. Ireland and Eire.

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